

2011

# Town of Isle au Haut Comprehensive Plan

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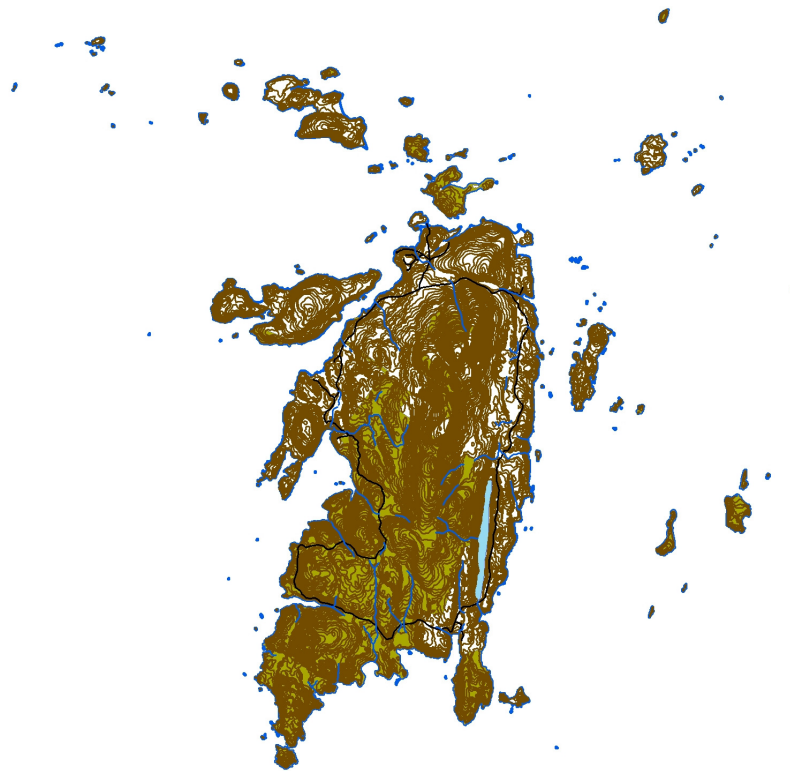
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# Town of Isle au Haut Comprehensive Plan

2011

Prepared by the Comprehensive Planning Committee of the Town of Isle au Haut



*To build a sustainable year round community and preserve the natural beauty and unique character of the island.*

*We dedicate the Isle au Haut Comprehensive Plan to the memory of Betsy Doermann. Betsy lent her time, energy, and perception to our work. She loved the Isle au Haut community and the beauty of the island. We miss you Betsy. We are grateful you graced the world when you did.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

### **RESULTS**

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## **Introduction and the Public Planning Process**

A comprehensive plan is both an inventory of current conditions and a guide for future development. It is an official public document that is adopted by local voters and must be approved by the State of Maine. It is important to note that the plan does not enact ordinances or regulations. It does, however, provide a basis for future land use ordinances and future town policies. A comprehensive plan is not a static document. Instead, it must be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is relevant and reflects the collective community opinion.

The current comprehensive planning effort began in 2006. A volunteer committee, made up of both seasonal and year round community members, was formed. The committee conducted a public opinion survey and took inventory of the necessary resource areas. Periodic public meetings, including an economic round table discussion, allowed community members to share ideas and concerns with the comprehensive planning committee. A newsletter shared information and provided updates about the comprehensive planning process. Hancock Planning Commission, the State Planning Office, Beginning with Habitat, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and the Island Institute provided information and support in the planning process.

This plan is a compilation of ideas and information from the community of Isle au Haut. The Comprehensive Planning Committee would like to thank all community members who provided background information, responded to the survey, attended meetings, participated in discussions and shared their views.

## **Isle au Haut Comprehensive Planning Committee**

Morgan Witham Hiltz- Co-chair

Greg Runge-Co-chair

Kate Taylor

Belvia MacDonald

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Robert Lingley

Rudy Graf

Betsy Doermann

With assistance from

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Alex Norton

Albert Gordon

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Bill Calvert

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Robert Gerber-Sebago Technics Ground Water Survey

Margaret Snell- Community Planning Fellow, Island Institute

## **Plan implementation**

Each strategy has identified a position in town government, committee, or organization, responsible for carrying out the policies of this plan. In addition, an implementation committee will be established to oversee and evaluate the execution of the plan. This committee will file a report in the Annual Town Report to update the community of the implementation progress.

## **Evaluation Measures**

Every five years the Implementation Committee will review and evaluate any major changes in the community, including significant changes in population, or whether development is occurring in designated areas. This committee will assess the progress toward achieving specified goals. In its report at annual town meeting, the implementation committee will offer recommendations toward achieving unmet goals or necessary modifications to the plan.

## Vision Statement

*To build a sustainable year round community and preserve the natural beauty and unique character of the island.*

### Key Values

#### **Community**

Isle au Haut is a small community of about 50 year-round residents. These residents develop deep bonds and depend on each other throughout the year. In the summer the population swells to about 300. Many of these families have been coming to the island for generations. As a result, close, treasured relationships develop between both year-round and seasonal residents. Growing the year-round community is important to both the year round and seasonal population.

Ideally, the year-round population should increase to about 100 residents. Affordable housing and economic opportunity are inextricably linked to sustaining the year-round community. In order to encourage an increase in population, several (5-10) new housing units should be added to the affordable housing stock. Cooperation between the town and organizations such as the Isle au Haut Community Development Corporation (ICDC) is critical in accomplishing this goal. Isle au Haut's zoning should be changed to permit mother-in-law type accessory apartments or duplexes to present additional affordable housing opportunities, and the planning board should investigate increasing density requirements in appropriate areas.

Isle au Haut's K-8 school is also a vital tool in maintaining a year-round community. Though enrollment has fallen to single digits, the community continues to enthusiastically support the school. Between summer pie auctions and winter holiday programs, the community, both seasonal and year round, commit significant resources to provide quality education. It is critical to maintaining a year round community that the Isle au Haut school remains open. Efforts to expand affordable housing options and encourage economic development will help attract young families to the island and increase school enrollment to 10-15 students.

Quality public services and facilities, such as safe roads, reliable electricity and high speed internet, make Isle au Haut a desirable place to live and are essential to supporting economic opportunity. This also includes maintaining reliable ties to the mainland. A safe, functional public landing and reliable, affordable ferry service is vital. Ideally, the boat schedule should permit community members to commute for work to Isle au Haut and to Stonington. A town manager could help oversee and improve town services such as safety, fire protection, emergency medical services, road maintenance, and the town dock.

#### **Natural Beauty**

Isle au Haut's natural beauty is one of its greatest assets, highly valued by community members. The coastal cliffs, rocky beaches, spruce forests, quiet bogs and pond contribute to Isle au Haut's wild natural character. About half of the main island is part of Acadia National Park, and a number of scenic areas are privately owned. Isle au Haut's land use ordinances are designed to maintain this natural beauty and

environmental quality. New construction should be minimally invasive and building practices should protect water quality. Zoning ordinances should be amended to include a height restriction. In order to limit the number of vehicles and traffic on the island, ferry service should continue to be restricted to passengers only. Similarly, the community prefers that tourism should remain at the present level, without wide spread development, such as condominiums or large hotels. The town should amend its ordinances to encourage the proper disposal of junk cars, old appliances and construction debris.

### ***Independence, Resourcefulness and Creativity***

Isle au Haut is separated from Stonington by six miles. This separation creates a sense that life is different on Isle au Haut compared to the mainland. Mainland cares can be left behind, and to some extent, people feel safer. Isle au Haut is an ideal place for a child to grow up, often with more freedom than would be permitted on the mainland. Maintaining this safe environment is a community priority.

This separation from the mainland has led to a culture of independence and resourcefulness. Islanders must make efficient use of limited resources. Creativity is valued. There is an interest in making the island even more self-sustaining, through alternative energy, locally produced food, and creative economic endeavors. Home-based businesses also provide economic opportunities for creative community members. The community has set a goal of creating at least three new home-based businesses in the next 10 years. The town must ensure that infrastructure, including ferry service, roads, electricity and high speed internet be available to support such efforts.

### ***Marine Heritage***

Isle au Haut's location in Penobscot bay has shaped its history, culture and identity, and continues to do so today. Isle au Haut was originally settled because of its convenient location to prime fishing grounds. The surrounding marine water quality is excellent, and must be maintained. Today lobstering is still a major part of life on Isle au Haut, though it is vulnerable to changes in the economy. Creative marketing and added value products could present opportunities to lessen the impact of external pressures. Oyster aquaculture also shows promise, and Isle au Haut is home to several clam-flats. Public access to the shore is vital if fishing is to continue to play a role in Isle au Haut's economy. Isle au Haut's public landing is invaluable and must be maintained as a safe and functional wharf to accommodate commercial fishing, recreation and vital links to the mainland. A conservation commission or land trust could also help the town acquire and maintain public access to the shore and scenic areas.

### ***Isle au Haut's Place in the Region***

Despite Isle au Haut's physical separation and independence, Isle au Haut has a place in a greater region. Strong ties exist between Isle au Haut and Stonington, as well as Deer Isle. The Mail Boat is docked in Stonington, and community members require parking for their mainland cars. Isle au Haut has shared resources with surrounding towns in the past. For example, Isle au Haut shares school administrative services with Deer Isle/ Stonington. Other such arrangements should be encouraged. The Hancock County Planning Commission provides opportunity for other regional cooperation and economic development. It is important that Isle au Haut continues to send a representative to Zone C so that the lobstermen are represented in the greater region. Isle

au Haut shares ties with other unbridged islands. Isle au Haut should continue to take part in the Maine Island Coalition. The school should continue to investigate the use of technology so that the teachers and students can collaborate with their counterparts on other islands. Organizations such as the Island Institute and the Maine Seacoast Mission help facilitate the connections between islands.

Draft

## A. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### 1. *Purpose*

Population forms the basis of a comprehensive plan. The people who make up the town of Isle au Haut will determine the shape of the community, what services it will need, and how the community will fit in with the natural world. This section outlines past population trends and projects future demographic changes. The implications of these changes are also discussed. Policies and strategies are introduced.

### 2. *Key Findings and Issues*

Isle au Haut has a year round population, semi year round population and seasonal population. The year round population of Isle au Haut can be characterized as decreasing. This population also seems to be aging. The semi-year round population seems to be increasing. The seasonal population continues to be stable, though residents have noted an increase in the conversion of year round homes to seasonal residences. The ability to maintain a year round population and school is a major population and demographic issue facing Isle au Haut.

### 3. *Public Opinion Survey Results*

Recent public opinion surveys found that 69 percent of respondents feel the year round population should increase, while 18 percent feel it should remain the same. There is a widespread concern that school remains open and viable. The community recognizes the connections between population, affordable housing and a healthy local economy.

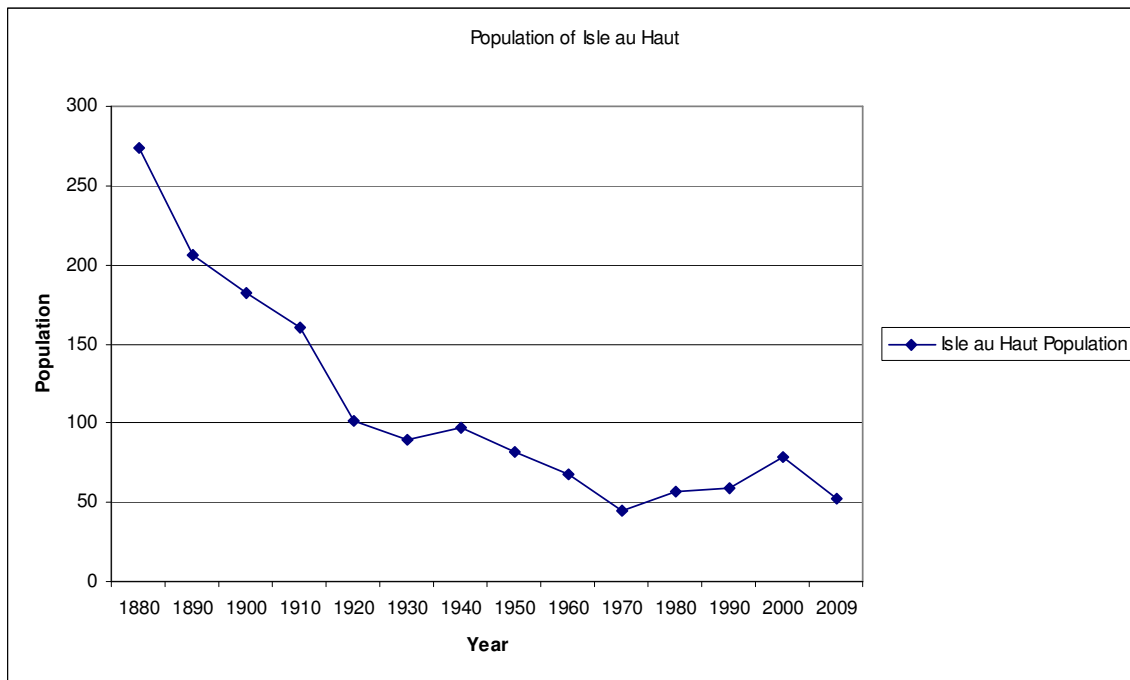
### 4. *Past and Recent Trends*

Isle au Haut has a seasonal, year round and semi-year round population. The semi-year round population may spend 8-10 months on the Island and spend 2-4 months elsewhere.

#### **Year round Population Trends**

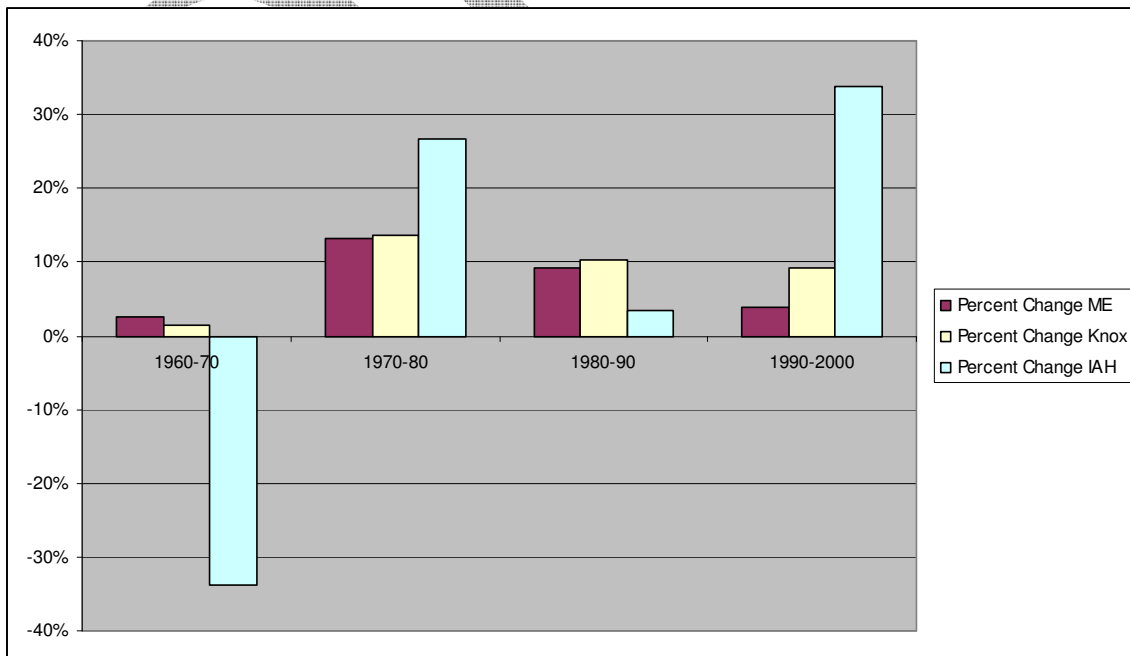
The 1880 census reports the population of Isle au Haut as 274. 1920 was the last census year during which the population surpassed 100. Since then, the census populations have fluctuated between 40 and 100, with individual years falling much lower. The current year round population is estimated around 50. Figure A.1 shows the US Census total population for Isle au Haut from 1880 to 2000. Note that the 2010

population according to the US Census is 73.



**Figure A.1 Historic Population**

Isle au Haut year round population fluctuates more than other communities. Because it is a small community, an increase or decrease of several people is noticeable and represents a large percent change. Figure A.2 shows the percent change in population from census period to census period for 1960-2000. This makes predicting future populations difficult.

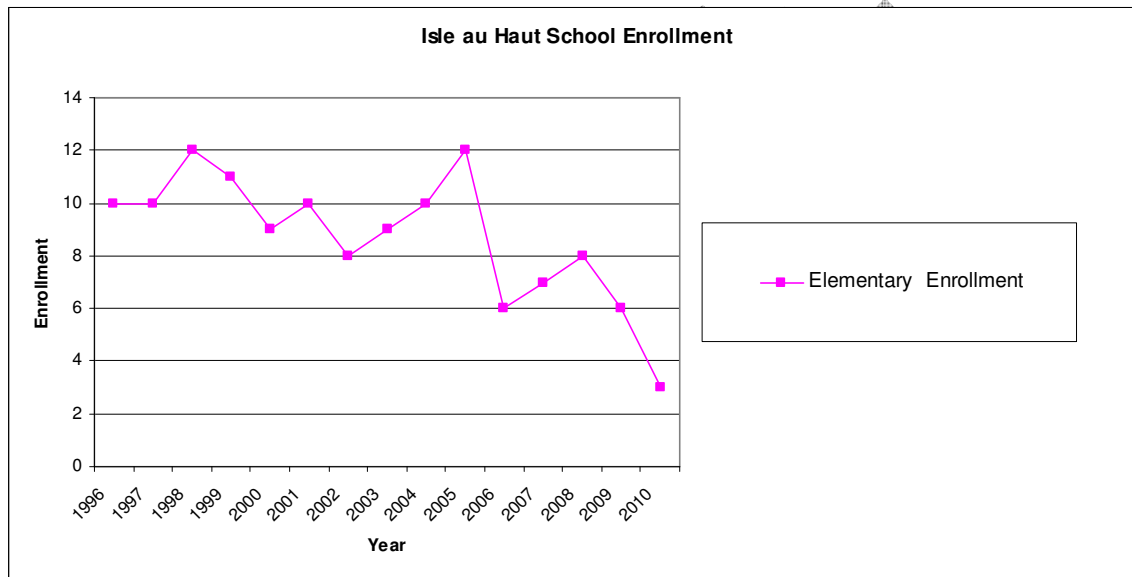


**Figure A.2 Percent Change in Population**



The population of Isle au Haut appears to be decreasing. The current population of approximately 50 is below the estimate of 75 (Maine State Planning Office 2010). The Maine State Planning Office projects the population of Isle au Haut to continue to decrease over the next twenty years while Maine and Knox County continue to grow. The median household size, according to the 2000 US Census was 2.47, up slightly from the 1990 Census figure of 2.3.

Though in the past the total number of students enrolled in the school had been relatively stable recently, the numbers have been decreasing. Figure A3 shows how school enrollment has changed. Within recent memory the school has had enrollment as great as 14. If enrollment were to rise above 15, significant changes in the structure of the school would be necessary.



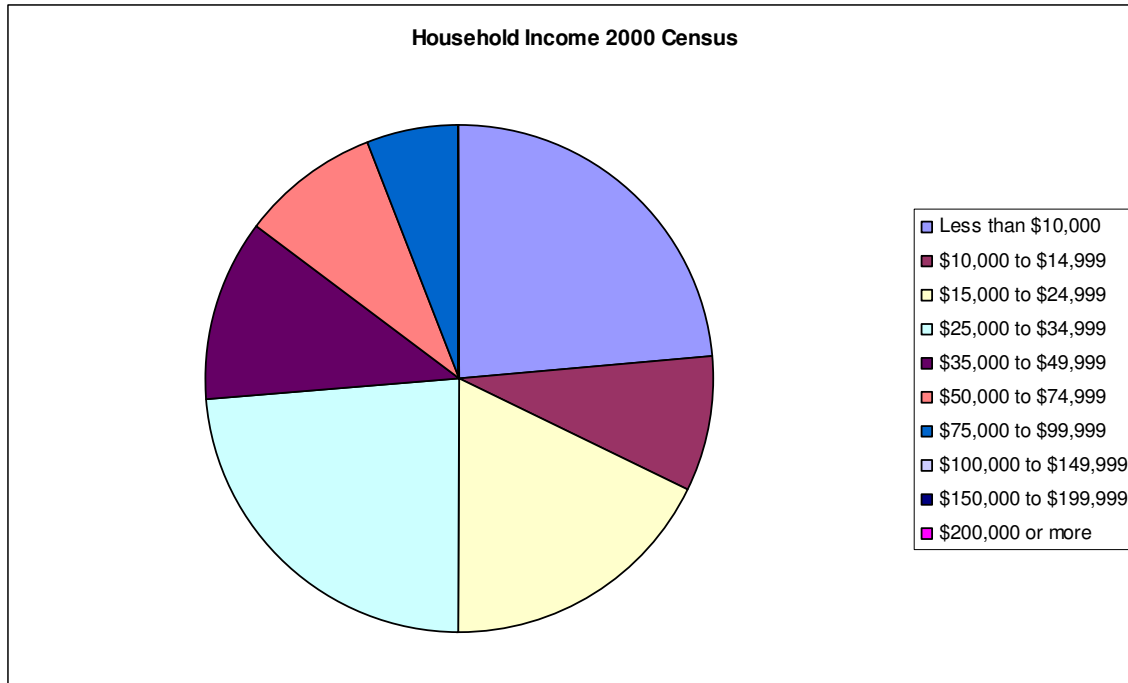
**Figure A.3 Isle au School Enrollment**

There are currently three students from two families in the Isle au Haut School (grades K-8). Two students are currently attending high school off island. In addition, one family moved to North Haven so that the family could be together while the boys attended high school. One student travels to Deer Isle-Stonington elementary school several days a week for special education services. With no younger children set to start Kindergarten, enrollment is projected for the 2011-2012 school year is projected to be three students. Maintaining a school is central to maintaining a viable year round community.

Isle au Haut's decrease in population is a consequence of both natural change and out-migration. The population is aging, and former year round residents may now live on Isle au Haut only seasonally. Some families leave island once their children reach high school age.

The Island Institute's Island Indicators report (2008) shows Isle au Haut's median age of 45 to be older than Maine's (2007) median age of 42. This has increased from 41 at the time of the 2000 US Census. For comparison, the US median age is estimated at 36.7 years. This figure means that 50 percent of the population of Isle au Haut is older than 45. The "over 45" group also seems to be the age group that is growing the most quickly. The community has noted that the "20-35" age group is smaller and not growing as quickly as the older age groups.

The 2000 US Census found that the median household income of Isle au Haut to be \$25,000 and the per capita income to be \$11,723. This is significantly lower than the median household income of Knox County (\$36,774) and Maine (\$37,240). Note that this data is nearly ten years old and may not reflect all incomes. Figure A.4 shows the income distribution as of the 2000 Census.



**Figure A.4 Income distribution**

The nature of living on an island means that many of Isle au Haut's residents have more than one occupation. For example one may lobster, but work as a carpenter during the winter. As a result, the 2000 Census data does not create a realistic picture of the occupations of the community. This is covered more in depth in the economy section.

The 2000 US Census found that a larger percentage of Isle au Haut's year round<sup>1</sup> residents graduated from high school (94.7 percent) than those of Knox County (87.5 percent) or the state of Maine (85.4 percent). Like the rest of Knox county, about 26 percent of the residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. This is greater than the state's percentage of 22.9 percent. However, the percentage of Isle au Haut residents that holds a bachelors degree in 2000 decreased from 30 percent in 1990.

Isle au Haut has few daily commuters to and from the Island. Most people living on Isle au Haut work on Isle au Haut or on the surrounding waters. According to the 2000 US Census, the average commute time is seven minutes, less than the state average. About 42 percent of the population drove alone, 40 percent worked at home and 18 percent walked. No other means of commuting were recorded. The mail boat schedule makes commuting to the mainland difficult within the constraints of a traditional work schedule. A few construction workers commute to Isle au Haut, but others board on-island. The availability of high speed internet in some areas permits telecommuting. As of 2010 DSL is available in areas near town and along the east side of the Island, but is

<sup>1</sup> The US Census defines resident as a person who spends more than six months in the community.

unavailable in Head Harbor, at the southern end. A ConnectME grant will soon extend DSL services to Head Harbor.

### **Semi- year round Population**

The number of people spending between 8 and 10 months on the Island seems to be increasing. This trend has caused some concern within the remaining year round population because there are fewer bodies on island in the winter to fill such positions as selectmen and fire chief as well as serve on other committees.

### **Seasonal Population**

Isle au Haut has a large seasonal population. This is estimated to be around 200. This population is concentrated in the summer colony of Point Lookout, but seasonal houses exist though out the settlement areas of the island including Rich's Cove and Moore's Harbor. In addition, the Inn at Isle au Haut (four rooms) and Acadia National Park's campground at Duck harbor (five lean-tos) can accommodate visitors. 6,000-7,000 people visit the park annually. Many houses are rented periodically.

## **5. Projected Population**

Since Isle au Haut has a small and variable population, it is difficult to predict future populations. The Maine State Planning Office (2010) has provided the predications through 2023 shown in table A.1. The predicted populations for Knox County and the State of Maine are included for comparison. Local estimates suggest that the population may be declining more quickly than these estimates show.

<b>Projected Population</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2023</b>
Isle au Haut	69	64	59
Knox	40,541	40,307	39,820
Maine	1,324,335	1,327,070	1,322,449

**Table A.1 Project Populations**

## **6. Issues of Public Concern**

Most respondents feel that the year round population should increase. Discussions with residents suggest that a population between 75 and 125 would be ideal. There is public concern that there are few young families with school age children within the community. Enrollment for the 2010-2011 school year is 3. There is concern that if the school were to close, a year round community on Isle au Haut would cease to exist. Young adults and children also contribute to the vitality of the community. The public opinion survey shows that a majority of the respondents favor an increase in the year round population of Isle au Haut.

The public opinion survey showed that 59 percent of the respondents were concerned about a growth in the summer population. Seasonal residents were more concerned about this growth (62 percent) than year round residents (44 percent). There is concern that an increase in summer population will lead to an increase in housing unit construction and a loss of the "wild character of the island".

## ***7. Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy:**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage the growth of a healthy, diverse and sustainable year round population of about 100. Seasonal population growth will not be encouraged.

### **Strategy:**

1. The town, through the select board, will support the work of Isle au Haut Community Development Corporation (ICDC) and other organizations to provide affordable housing and economic development opportunities. Timeframe: on-going.
2. The town and school board are committed to providing quality K-12 education. Timeframe: ongoing.
3. The town, overseen by the select board, will continue to provide quality public services. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. The town will work with other island communities and organizations to maintain year round island communities. Timeframe: ongoing.

## **B. Economy**

### **1. Purpose**

To help fulfill the state goal of “promoting an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being, this section:

- a. Describes the current economic conditions
- b. Summarizes recent trends
- c. Identifies key current economic issues

By understanding the economy of Isle au Haut, the town is better able to plan for its future. Policies and strategies are also discussed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Perhaps Isle au Haut’s greatest asset is its quality of place. The natural resources, physical beauty and tranquility attract year round residents, seasonal residents, and tourists. Historically, Isle au Haut was settled because of its proximity to productive fishing grounds. Isle au Haut is home to a summer colony, numerous summer cottages, and includes part of Acadia National Park.

Economically, however, Isle au Haut’s location is also somewhat of a disadvantage today. Energy costs are high and fishermen must compete for territory with neighboring communities. In addition, the heavy dependence on one marine resource has proven dangerous, leaving fishermen vulnerable to decreases in price or stock levels, increases in operating costs, or pressures from mainland fishermen. Though tourism is currently an important part of its economy, many residents do not want to expand the dependence on tourism. The development of small businesses within the export sector, and a population able to work from home on Isle au Haut may be important in the Island’s future economy. There is a strong connection between the population of the Island, affordable housing, and economic opportunities. The town’s ICDC program helps to provide affordable housing and microloans to suitable applicants.

### **3. Public opinion Survey Results**

A recent public opinion survey shows overall concern about Isle au Haut’s economy. The majority of respondents to a public opinion survey feel that “secure” employment opportunities for both adults and young people need improvement. Respondents, both year round and seasonal, favor the development of small and home-based business. Year round residents responding to the survey favor the development of aquaculture business. The respondents recognize the connections between economic growth and affordable year-round housing; 86 percent feel that more year round homes are necessary. More than half of the respondents rate an increase in summer homes and restaurants as unfavorable. Nearly half of the respondents feel that too much business was lost to off-island service providers, but nearly 40 percent of the year round respondents do not view this as a problem. A number of comments suggest a shortage of carpenters, contractors, and other skilled workers.

More than half of respondents favor the town of Isle au Haut’s allocation of money for economic development.

Maintaining Isle au Haut's fishing heritage is important to its residents, with two out of three respondents feeling that more should be done to protect fishing related jobs. Survey comments suggest that maintaining a working waterfront is important. Several comments addressed the importance of establishing an exclusive zone.

Conversely Tourism is not as popular. More than 80 percent of respondents rate increased tourism as "highly unfavorable" or somewhat "unfavorable". The public does not favor the construction of restaurants, hotels, condominiums, additional summer homes or other businesses that would encourage increased tourism.

## **4. *Overview of Existing Conditions and Data***

### **4.1 History and Background**

Isle au Haut has a strong fishing history. From prehistoric times, Isle au Haut served as summer fishing grounds for Native Americans, as shown by numerous shell middens. The location is convenient to deeper waters for cod and ground fish as well as prime lobster grounds. The island's advantage diminished as internal combustion engines became more common; the population of the Island began to decrease. Lobstering, however, continues to be a major part of Isle au Haut's economy.

Other past uses of Isle au Haut and its smaller neighboring islands include sheep grazing, boat building and tourism. Isle au Haut's physical beauty has attracted summer visitors for more than 100 years. A summer colony at the northern end of the Island was established in the late nineteenth century. In the 1940s, about half of the land on Isle au Haut became part of Acadia National Park, which now attracts day visitors and campers.

### **4.2 Isle au Haut's place in the region**

Isle au Haut is considered part of the St. George labor market and the Blue Hill Economic Summary Area (ESA). These connections are, however, weak, with a very small commuting population. Isle au Haut's major tie to the mainland is Stonington on Deer Isle, six miles away, where the mail boat is docked. Ellsworth and Blue Hill are near by service areas. Few people commute to the mainland to work. Those who do commute daily, commute only as far as Deer Isle.

### **4.3 Current Conditions**

The current population of Isle au Haut is approximately 50, including children. The workforce is 36. This is defined as residents over the age of 16 who are employed at least seasonally. This does not include those who work on Isle au Haut, but live elsewhere (e.g. construction workers). The labor force increased between 1990 and 2000, but has remained fairly stable from 2000-2009.

Subsistence patterns on an island are different than those on the mainland. Residents must have a number of skills. One resident described her occupation as "islander". The island has a tradition of residents working several different jobs in more than one industry. For example fishing and construction compliment each other well. Many of the jobs on Isle au Haut are part time, seasonal or change with the seasons. Like other island communities, the self-employment rate is high.

Isle au Haut's isolation means that most residents have a very short commute. The average time traveled to work on Isle au Haut is seven minutes, which is shorter than the

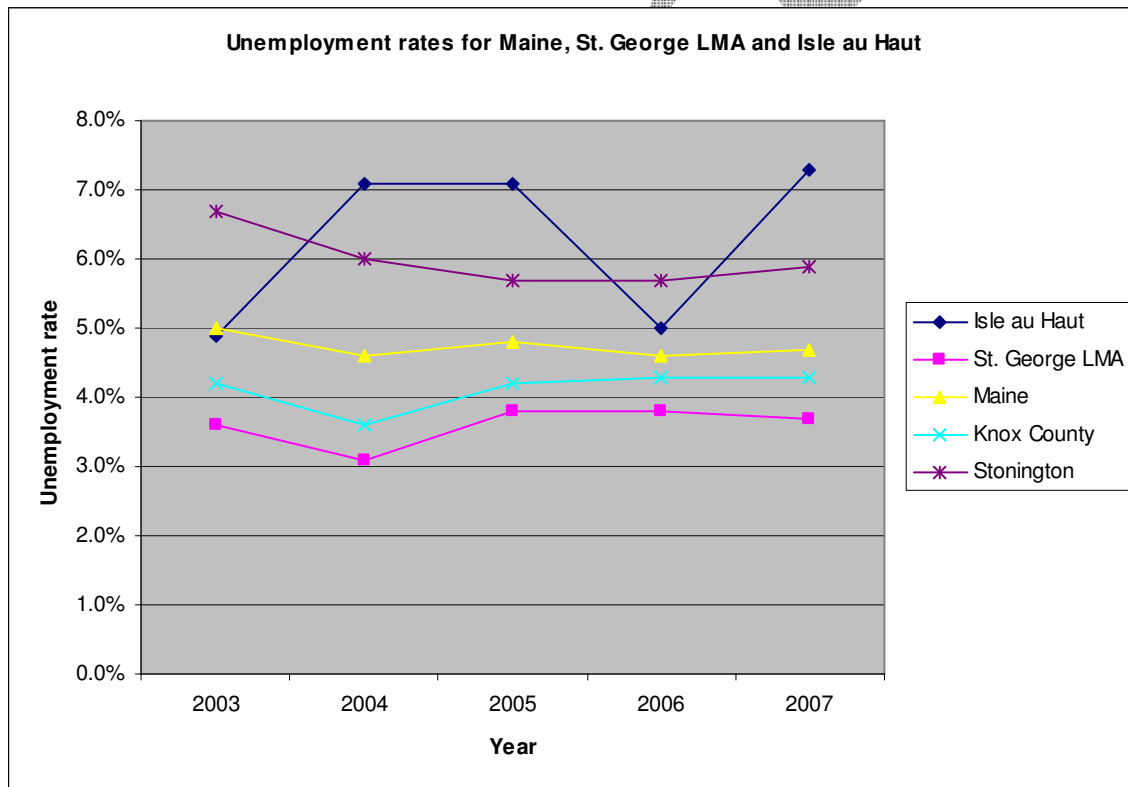
average commute for residents of Knox County, 19 minutes. Most commute by car, but a large proportion walk.

## 5. *Overview of Existing Regulations Affecting the Economy*

Lobster fishing is governed by state and federal regulations. Building and construction is overseen by town zoning and the state building codes. Isle au Haut's past lack of a code enforcement officer has hindered the enforcement of building code and zoning regulations. Other sectors are overseen by various state and local regulations.

## 6. *Summary of Current Trends*

The unemployment rate for Isle au Haut has typically been higher than for the St. George Labor Market region, Knox County or Maine. Figure B.1 shows this trend.



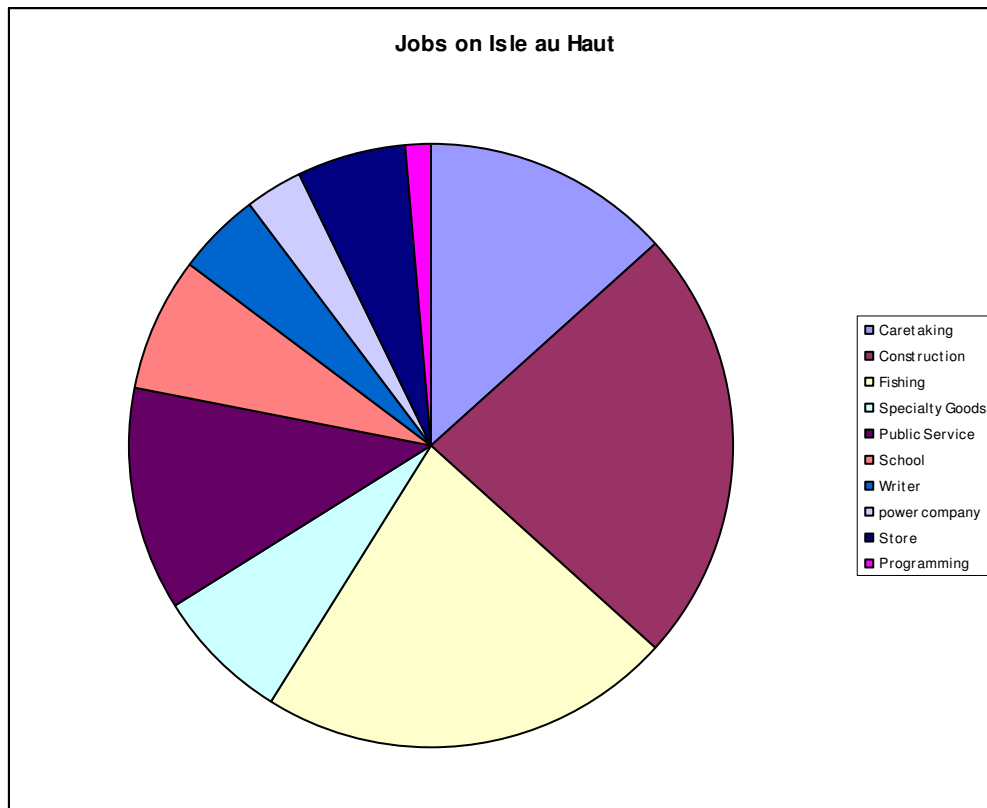
**Figure B.1 Unemployment Rates**

### **Economic Strengths and Weakness**

Isle au Haut's greatest economic asset is its quality of place. The beautiful scenery, secluded location, clean environment and quiet atmosphere attract both visitors and residents to the Island. The Island's location affords convenient access to marine resources. The town landing guarantees fishermen access to the water in perpetuity, and the mail boat company is helpful and reliable. The school offers an exceptional educational experience, and much of the island has access to high speed internet. Community members often comment about how safe they feel on the Island.

The location of the island is also a significant economic weakness. The isolation results in a small population, as well as an increased cost of living and doing business.

The current winter mail boat schedule does not encourage commuting to the mainland, and mailboat tickets are a significant expense. Other economic weaknesses include a lack of diversity in the economy. This can translate to a lack of opportunity and a lack of attraction, both for new residents and young people who grew up in the community.



**Figure B.2 Year Round Jobs, Including Part Time**

## **6.1 Fishing**

Fishing is an important aspect of Isle au Haut's export economy. There are 12-15 people employed in the fishing industry on about 10 boats on Isle au Haut. Most of these are active in the lobster fishery, though several have fished for swordfish off the Grand Banks or used a tub trawl to catch halibut. In 2007, 3,365 trap tags were issued. Isle au Haut's fishing industry is challenged by a number of issues, including the dependence on one species, limited waterfront access, fishing ground competition, and high input costs. The marine resources section gives more information about this issue.

## **6.2 Contractors and Construction**

There are 2-4 contractors as well as many carpenter and painters working with them both full and part time. Construction is also a source of income for fishermen during the off-season. Services provided include carpentry, painting, septic, landscaping, among others. In addition, a number of contractors, carpenters, plumbers and electricians travel to work on Isle au Haut from off island. The Isle au Haut Power Company employs several part time employees to maintain electrical transmission lines. The public opinion survey suggests a shortage of skills in this area on Island. Survey comments suggest that



the shortage varies from season to season, as many fishermen are available in the winter, but not in the summer.

### **6.3 Small Business**

Small businesses on Isle au Haut are part of both the export and service economies. Several businesses bring in money from outside of the Island. The Inn at Isle au Haut includes four guest rooms and is open from June through September. It provides seasonal work for approximately four to six people. Black Dinah Chocolatiers and Café creates gourmet chocolates that are available by mail-order year round and operates a small café with coffee, tea, hot chocolate, baked goods and chocolates during the summer and fall. The chocolates are also available in florists, food and wine shops on the mainland. In addition to the owners, BDC employs several people, one full time. The café has also hosted a weekly farmers' market, periodic concerts and provides a gallery for local artists. BDC started in one of Isle au Haut's ICDC houses, which the owners have purchased and are renovating in order to expand their business.

The Inn, BDC, and other individuals offer catering and event services for weddings and other parties.

The Island store sells groceries, some hardware and some tourist gifts. It employs one manager and several workers part-time. The store also delivers oil and kerosene.

### **6.4 Government and Public Service**

Acadia National Park hires several seasonal rangers. One ranger is on call year round, though there is little work off-season. The town employs a number of people part time. This includes the board of selectmen (three), treasurer, town clerk, tax collector, road commissioner, bookkeeper, librarian, etc. One full time teacher works at the school with a full time ed tech. Other part time teachers are added as needed. The post office employs a part time postmaster. Garbage and recyclables collection is arranged through a town contract.

### **6.5 Writers and Artists, Telecommuting and Working "from Home"**

The natural beauty of the island is a great backdrop for writing and other work that is not location dependent. The availability of high-speed internet allows some residents to telecommute to an office in another location while living on Isle au Haut. Isle au Haut is also home to a number of writers and artists. This also brings outside money into the community. This is a category that can expand, with the proper telecommunication infrastructure.

### **6.6 Tourism**

Tourism is another important part of the export economy in that it brings outside money to Isle au Haut. Isle au Haut is a scenic location that attracts tourists during the summer, especially during the month of August. This includes day hikers and campers in Acadia National Park, guests at the Inn or weekly cottage renters. Between 6,000 and 7,000 people visit the portion of Acadia National Park on Isle au Haut each year. Visitors to the Island spend money at island businesses. The Inn at Isle au Haut offers a number of specialty packages that include other ventures on the Island, such as gourmet cooking, chocolate making and lobstering. A naturalist offers tours for small groups to learn about

island ecology. Seasonal cottages require caretaking and cleaning, which provides additional employment for Island residents. The Keepers House Inn is for sale, and not operational, but it may be purchased in the future. This would add a second Inn to Isle au Haut. The total taxable sales for 2005 were \$945,600, 70 percent of which occurred in the third quarter, the “tourist” season. Moreover, 70 percent of these sales were in the restaurant and lodging category.

## **6.7 Off-Island employment**

Currently only one person commutes daily from Isle au Haut to the mainland. The mail boat schedule is not compatible with traditional work schedules. The few who do commute must spend some nights off Island. Several telecommuting residents may travel to their physical offices periodically.

## **7. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public has recognized the role economic opportunity plays in maintaining a vibrant year round community. This issue is closely linked with the population and demographics of the island and the availability of affordable housing. The public opinion survey shows that there is concern about a lack for full time, year round, stable employment. The respondents note that they do not favor an expansion of the tourist industry. Another concern is the degree to which the economy depends on one marine species: the lobster.

## **8. *Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy:**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage and support marine based enterprises, which have long been the basis of Isle au Haut’s economy.
2. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage small-scale entrepreneurial business and cottage industries.
3. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage telecommuting, writing and other home based occupations. The town shall ensure that high speed internet and other necessary infrastructure is available in all residential areas.
4. It shall be the policy of Isle au Haut to investigate methods of becoming more energy independent.
5. The town recognizes the importance of an on-island general store that serves the needs of the community.
6. It shall be the policy of Isle au Haut to create a friendly and welcoming climate.

### **Strategy**

1. The town will support the work of Island Community Development Corporations (ICDC) to provide affordable housing and economic development opportunities. Time frame: ongoing.
2. The board of selectmen and planning board will support the lobster and fishing industries as well as any marine related activities that are seen as compatible with

- values of the community. This includes working to ensure access to marine resources for the people of Isle au Haut. Time frame: ongoing
3. The town of Isle au Haut will work with surrounding towns, including Deer Isle and Stonington, to encourage regional economic development. Time frame: ongoing.
  4. The town encourages the power company to investigate alternative energy sources while continuing to provide reliable electricity. Timeframe: Ongoing.
  5. The town and the Isle au Haut boat company shall work together to ensure that the boat services and schedule continue to meet the needs of the community. Time frame: ongoing, though periodic meetings.
  6. The town and ICDC shall work together to market Isle au Haut as a welcoming interesting community. Time frame: 2011.

Draft

## **C. Housing**

### **1. Purpose**

The State of Maine has a goal of promoting affordable, decent housing opportunities for all of its citizens. This section will help Isle au Haut move toward that goal by capturing the current conditions of the housing market as well as local housing needs. Housing is closely linked with the economy and the long-term viability of island communities. Policies and Strategies are also discussed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Nearly 80 percent of Isle au Haut's housing units are used seasonally. Affordable housing options for new residents are lacking on Isle au Haut. High land values and low incomes coupled with the popularity of the Island as a summer and second home location has led to high housing costs and discouraged an increase in year-round residents. The town of Isle au Haut has addressed this issue through the Isle au Haut Community Development Corporation (ICDC) and town-owned rental units, but the complexity of the issue suggests that a new focus on affordable housing for new residents is crucial. The process is ongoing.

Several former year round houses have been sold and are now seasonal residences. This reduces the inventory of available year round housing.

Rental housing is especially important to Isle au Haut to allow prospective year round residents to experience island life before committing to the purchase of property.

Isle au Haut is projected to have about 164 housing units in 2030 compared to 143 in 2010.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

The results of a public opinion survey show that the Isle au Haut community is concerned about the affordability of housing on the Island. 81 percent of respondents feel that the community should explore ways to develop more affordable housing. A majority of respondents, though smaller, at 59 percent, are in favor of developing work force housing. Seasonal residents are more likely to favor work force housing. A super majority of respondents do not favor the construction of condominiums, apartment houses, or townhouse style attached units. Residents are in favor of small development, consistent with the existing character of the Island.

A majority of residents favor the creation of size or height regulations for new construction on Isle au Haut and a re-examination of zoning ordinances. Some commented that the minimum lot size in Zone C, accessible shore land, be increased from one quarter acre, to be consistent with shoreland zoning ordinances. This is further addressed in the land use section.

### **4. Overview of Existing Conditions/Data**

A drive-by survey in 2010 revealed that Isle au Haut has approximately 143 housing units. Of these, 22 percent (about 32) are year round residences. The other 78

percent are seasonal residences or second homes. This is consistent with the figures from the 2000 US Census. The housing units are mostly single unit detached, but a number have associated guesthouses or apartments. It is unclear from the external survey what percentage of these guesthouses have separate kitchen facilities. The 2000 census reports that 51 housing units lack complete kitchen facilities and 49 lack complete plumbing facilities. There are no year round houses on the outer minor islands.

At least six houses are available for rent year round through the town or the ICDC. Rents range from \$75-\$600 per month, with a median rent of about \$475, which is less than the Knox County median rent (2000 US Census, adjusted for inflation) of \$610. These six houses amount to about 18 percent of the year round housing units, which is less than the percentage of rental housing in Knox County: 32.9 percent.

According to the 2000 Census, the median year round housing value is \$106,900. Fifty-two percent of these houses are valued between \$100,000 and \$149,999. Median income of Isle au Haut in 2000 was \$25,000, while the median income of Knox County was \$43,819. Adjusted for inflation, median housing value is estimated in 2010 to be \$135,386 and median income is estimated to be \$31,596. Estimates from municipal tax assessments suggest that 2008 median valuation of buildings to be \$148,963 and real estate to be \$296,311. The 2008 median housing value for Knox County was \$210,329, and \$189,200 for Maine. Note that recent sales data for Isle au Haut is lacking because of limited sales.

Currently all designated rental houses are occupied. Community members have noted a need for workforce housing or other housing to address possible expansion or changes in the community.

## **5. *Affordable Housing***

Because of Isle au Haut's appeal as a second home location, affordable housing is a major issue on the Island. The Maine Housing Authority does not have data for Isle au Haut (because of the small number of sales), but Deer Isle has an affordability index of 0.36. An index of less than one indicates that housing is generally unaffordable to those with a household income equal to the median. The state of Maine has an affordability index of 0.79.

Twenty years ago, the ICDC was formed to help address this issue. ICDC currently owns two three-bedroom houses, which are rented for \$425-\$600 per month for up to five years. This is designed to give families an opportunity to experience life on the Island before they make the commitment to buy or build a house. Interested families might also be able to purchase the house or a parcel of town land to build a new house. ICDC could then construct another house on yet-to-be purchased land. ICDC is planning on building two new rental houses in 2011. In addition to providing affordable year round housing, ICDC also includes a micro-loan program to lend money for local business endeavors. This can help new families establish an economic hold in the community.

The Town owns three houses that serve a similar purpose. Rent ranges from \$75-475 per month. One of these houses is available for the schoolteacher to rent, if necessary.

The town also owns land available to be leased or sold for additional affordable housing. Several families have moved from ICDC or town rentals into houses constructed

on land purchased from the town. Existing Town-owned lands are in three locations and include about eight possible lots, with undetermined access.

Affordable housing is key to maintaining a viable year round community on Isle au Haut.

## 6. *Overview of Existing Regulations Governing Housing*

The land use section addresses the specific ordinances that affect housing on Isle au Haut. Residential development is prohibited in Zone E (Resource Protection). The zoning ordinances outline the minimum lot sizes for other zones: Zone A (Remote Shoreland)- 10 acre minimum, Zone B (Accessible Interior)-two acre minimum, Zone C (Accessible Shoreland)-1/4 acre minimum, and Zone D (Remote Interior)-20 acre minimum. If a parcel is located within more than one zone, the minimum lot size is calculated by a weighted average of concerned minimum lot sizes. The minimum lot size applies to each dwelling unit, implying that any guesthouses or apartments require the minimum lot size for each unit. Note that shoreland zoning ordinances require higher minimum acreages.

Maine's shoreland zoning act requires towns to regulate land use activities within 250 feet of Great Ponds, rivers, freshwater and coastal wetlands, including tidal waters. The act also governs areas within 75 feet of some streams. This act provides minimal restrictions; towns may adopt ordinance's that are more strict.

ICDC's mission is, according to the bylaws :

To assist in providing housing opportunities for year-round residents in assistance of the future economic development of the community of Isle au Haut. To further the economic development of the community, and to encourage, and assist the settlement and resettlement of appropriate traditional resource based fishing, aquaculture, agricultural, and other business opportunities on Isle au Haut. To improve the economic well-being of low to moderate income residents of Isle au Haut by encouraging such economic development and providing housing opportunities for such residents.

ICDC has an application process to ensure that applicants will be able to contribute to the island's economy, and to determine that applicants have the financial capacity to succeed on the island.

## 7. *Summary of Current Trends*

**Table C.1**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Total Structures Built</b>	<b>Year Round Structures Built</b>
1990-1999	42	9
1980-1989	10	7
1970-1979	13	7
1960-1969	16	6
1940-1959	18	0
1939 or earlier	66	0
Source: 2000 US Census, 2009 Maine State Planning Office		

Isle au Haut has about 140 housing units. Most(nearly 80 percent) are seasonal. Thirty-two housing units are year round residences. The median housing value was \$106,900 according to the 2000 census. This is 89 percent of the national median housing value. However, Isle au Haut's household median income (2000) of \$34,167 is

68 percent of the national median income. Table C.1 shows the years in which structures

were constructed. The data suggest that though much of the island's housing units are older, about one-quarter were constructed within the last twenty years. The 2000 census shows, however, that more than half of the year round houses were built within the last twenty years.

The drive-by survey revealed that, overall, the condition of housing on Isle au Haut is fair. This survey does not reveal the percentage of houses that are not winterized, but this proportion is believed to be great, as seasonal houses often lack insulation and sufficient heat for winter use. Homes are heated by kerosene or wood. Long time residents have noted a shift away from wood heat toward kerosene.

A number of houses are rented. This includes the two ICDC houses and three town-owned houses. Many other houses are rented seasonally, both winter and summer.

Several houses and a number of land parcels are currently for sale. Residents have noted a trend towards the sale and transition of year round residences to seasonal use homes, though the percentage of year round homes has been fairly stable between the 2010 road side survey and the 2000 US Census.

## **8. *Local and Regional Issues***

The high cost of housing compared to relatively low income is a major issue for the Town of Isle au Haut as well as coastal Maine as a whole. During the past nine years the median home price for Knox County has increased by 45.8 percent while median income has increased by 29.3 percent. It should be noted that the median home price peaked in 2007 and these two graphs are currently converging, but the gap is still great.

Living expenses are greater on Isle au Haut than in mainland communities. Electric rates are close to seven times the mainland average. Kerosene, propane and gasoline are also comparatively expensive. Energy efficiency is especially important to help reduce living expenses. Island life requires ferry tickets, mainland parking and a second mainland car, all of which are added expenses.

## **9. *Dwelling Unit Projections***

The number of necessary dwelling units can be predicted by dividing the predicted population by the household size. Because of Isle au Haut's small population, predicting future population is difficult. Several estimates are presented below. The Hancock Regional Planning Commission estimates a 2030 year round population of 61, which would suggest the need for about 25 housing units to accommodate a household size of 2.47. Several additional factors suggest that there will be several new housing units constructed. As populations age, the household size shrinks, which may lead to the construction of several housing units. Also, in an attempt to offer more affordable housing opportunities, and address the need for transitional or workforce housing, ICDC plans to construct several new houses. If the year round population is to increase, more housing units must be constructed. Following past trends, it is expected that there will be some seasonal home construction, especially given the land currently for sale. This could lead to a total of 150-164 housing units, including seasonal homes. To account for unknowns, this plan will use a 15 percent increase factor for all dwellings (year round and seasonal) between the present (2010) and 2030. According to this factor, there will be about 164 housing units in 2030 compared to 143 in 2010.

## ***10. Issues of Public Concern***

The availability of affordable year round housing is a major issue of concern for the community of Isle au Haut. This includes both affordable rental housing and houses to purchase. Housing and land prices are often out of reach for average residents and property taxes have increased more than 100 percent in the past ten years. In addition the cost of living on Isle au Haut, including energy, transportation, and food is more expensive than on the mainland. Affordable housing is closely connected with economic opportunity and maintaining a sustainable year round population.

Conversations with community members reveal that there is some concern about the number of year round homes that have become seasonal residences.

Public opinion surveys reveal that respondents are concerned that any future development must be consistent with the rural character of Isle au Haut. This includes modest single-family homes instead of multi-unit buildings or condominiums. Some residents favor an easing of the zoning to allow accessory apartments.

There are few options for senior citizens who can no longer live independently on Isle au Haut.



## ***11. Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy:**

1. The town will support the work of Isle au Haut Community Development Corporations (ICDC) to provide diverse affordable housing for different target groups, including young families.
2. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to seek to achieve at least 10 percent of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable.
3. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut that energy efficiency and green building should be encouraged.
4. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut that any new development shall not threaten long-term water quality.

### **Strategy**

1. The zoning ordinances shall be amended to permit accessory apartments or similar in appropriate locations. Timeframe: 2012.
2. ICDC and the town will seek funds from a variety of sources, including Maine Housing, Community Development Block Grant Program, USDA Rural Development to rehabilitate and increase the year round housing stock. Timeframe: 2011.
3. The town selectmen will maintain an inventory of available town land. Timeframe: develop inventory-2011, maintenance-ongoing.
4. The town selectmen will document a transparent process for the transfer and sale of town land. Timeframe: 2011.
5. ICDC and Planning Board will encourage energy efficiency and green building standards for all new construction and major rehabilitation ventures and explore economic incentives for such practices. Timeframe: 2011-2012.
6. The town of Isle au Haut shall adopt a PACE energy ordinance so that residents are eligible for PACE loans. Timeframe: 2011.
7. The planning board shall ensure that all new construction does not harm Isle au Haut's water quality. Timeframe: ongoing.

## **D. Transportation**

### **1. Purpose**

This section:

- a. Describes the extent and status of the town's transportation systems including roadways, ferry service, docks, and parking
- b. Identifies the condition, capacity, and use of those systems
- c. Assesses the adequacy of those systems in handling current demands
- d. Assesses the adequacy of those systems in accommodating the demands generated by projected changes in population and development
- e. Presents policies and strategies to address transportation related concerns

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

There are about 11 miles of paved and gravel roads on Isle au Haut in variable condition. The majority of the community is satisfied with road maintenance, though a large percentage of year round respondents commented that winter maintenance needs improvement. The number of vehicles seems to be increasing on Isle au Haut.

The ferry service, Isle au Haut Boat Company's Mail Boat, is critical to Isle au Haut's economy, and the community is generally satisfied with the service. Public access to the water was improved in the fall in 2009 with the construction of a new dock at the Isle au Haut public landing.

More information about transportation can be found in the Public Facilities and Services and Marine Resource Chapters.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

Most respondents rated the Mail Boat Services as "good" or "excellent. Several respondents commented about the cost, and others remarked that they would prefer the boat services to be based on Isle au Haut instead of Stonington. Respondents appreciated that this is not a car ferry, as this decreases the traffic on Island.

Sixty-one percent rated road maintenance as "good", though thirty-five percent of year round residents feel that winter plowing, sanding and salting needs improvement. Fifty-six percent rated waterfront access as "good". A number of written comments suggested speed on the roads is an issue, especially near the pond, Annis Hill and Head Harbor.

A majority of respondents rated parking as "good" or "excellent", though 23 percent felt that it needs improvement. Some respondents commented about vehicles being left at the public dock parking areas indefinitely.

A majority of public opinion respondents were in favor of removing old vehicles from the island; however, there is some reluctance from the community to use public money to remove private debris.

### **4. Overview of Existing Conditions**

Map 6 shows the roads and public landing of Isle au Haut with respect to existing zoning and property boundaries.

Because Isle au Haut has only one road and public landing, these areas are also the default evacuation routes.

#### **4.1 State, Municipal, Private and Park Roads**

Isle au Haut has about 11 miles of public roads. 4.25 miles are within Acadia National Park. Parts of the road are paved, and parts are gravel. The town roads are maintained throughout the winter, while the park roads are not. The condition of the road varies from good to poor. Maine DOT does not have any recent traffic counts for Isle au Haut, but the counts would likely be low, especially in the winter.

There are countless scenic locations along this road. Areas of particular note include Moores Harbor, Duck Harbor, Shark Point Beach, Head Harbor, Annis Hill, Long Pond, and the Thoroughfare.

The public opinion survey revealed that a majority of respondents were satisfied with the overall condition of the roads. The survey results do, however, note some concern about winter maintenance, and erosion to gravel roads during storms. Such run off can affect water quality and increase sedimentation.

#### **4.2 Ferry Service**

Isle au Haut's main tie to the main land is a mail boat operated by Isle au Haut Boat Services, a private non-profit organization since 2002. Seventy-five percent of the operating costs are covered by passenger, mail and freight fares, while 25 percent is paid for by the town (since 2005), US Department of Transportation, National Park Service and donations. The mail boat stops at the Isle au Haut town landing throughout the year. In the summer and early fall, it also stops at the Point Lookout dock and Acadia National Park's camp ground at Duck Harbor. The trip from Stonington to Isle au Haut's public landing takes about 45 minutes. The mail boat does not carry vehicles. Any vehicles or other large items must be barged onto the island by private services. The current (2011) passenger fares are \$18.50 one-way for nonresidents and \$9.50 one-way for residents. There were several comments during the public opinion survey about the price of the mail boat. The cost for operating the mail boat is the same at empty as it is at full capacity (62 people).

During the summer, the mail boat runs five round trips each day. During the winter, the mail boat operates six days a week, with no service on Sundays or postal holidays. There is a morning boat and evening boat both on an off the Island. The schedule is not conducive to commuting from Isle au Haut to work on the mainland because the boat and captains are based in Stonington. However, currently one person is commuting to work in Deer Isle. Some high school students do commute to Stonington, but are unable to take part in extra curricular activities. In addition to the regular winter schedule, monthly extra trips are scheduled on either Sundays or Monday holidays. The boat can be chartered for other special trips, and is available for 24-hour emergency calls. The current boat services would be able to handle any expected population growth without any additional costs. Isle au Haut Boat Services is governed by a board of 12, each serving a three-year term.

Mail boat arrival times generate significant traffic, both auto and pedestrian around the public landing.

### **4.3 Isle au Haut Public Landing**

Year round Isle au Haut's public landing is vital to the town's connection to the mainland. This landing also provides commercial fishermen access to the water. The dock at the town landing was replaced during the fall of 2009. This project was funded by a Community Development Block Grant from Maine's Department of Economic Development, the Department of Transportation's Small Harbor Improvement Program, Maine's Working Water Front Program, and the Island Institute. The dock is 160 feet long and 20-24 feet wide, with a 70 foot ramp. The dock is estimated to be useable for 50 years.

Because this project was funded through the Working Waterfront program, the Isle au Haut Public Landing guarantees commercial fishermen access to the water in perpetuity. It is the only waterfront site on Isle au Haut accessible to all of the town's fishermen.

Isle au Haut does not currently have a harbormaster. Moorings are placed by individuals with the consultation of fishermen and mooring holders. There is no fee paid to the town for moorings.

### **4.4 Vehicles**

Because Isle au Haut has no car ferry any vehicles must be privately barged onto the island. More vehicles are barged onto the island than are barged off. As of the 2000 census, most households had at least two vehicles available. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of vehicles on the island is increasing. Disposal of derelict vehicles is difficult and costly.

### **4.5 On Island Parking**

There is parking for about 20 vehicles near the public landing. Parking is restricted to one week at a time. Parking space is limited in the summer. There is some concern about perpetual parking at the town landing. Some cars have been towed in the past. Enforcement is inconsistent and difficult.

### **4.6 Off Island Parking**

Most island residents have personal vehicles parked in Stonington. Parking and storage of freight and store inventory are available at the Isle au Haut Boat Company's facilities in Stonington. The wharf and building are leased. As of November 2009, 26 people park outdoors and 10 park indoors at the boat company, and are billed monthly. Other residents have private parking arrangements in Stonington.

### **4.7 Barging**

Large items and vehicles must be barged on the island. The towns of Isle au Haut and Stonington together purchased the Colwell property in Stonington intended to be a staging place for barges destined to Isle au Haut in the late 1990s. Currently, a number of moorings in Stonington must be moved for the Colwell Ramp to truly serve the needs of Isle au Haut. Barges have also departed for Isle au Haut from Webb Cove. The *Island Transporter*, out of Rockland, is able to land on Isle au Haut.

## **5. *Overview of Existing Regulations Governing Transportation***

Town ordinances limit the amount of time a vehicle may be left at the town landing.

## **6. *Adequacy of Transportation Systems***

The mail boat is sufficient to accommodate any expected population. The new public landing's life is estimated to be 50 years. The road ways are adequate for the amount of traffic Isle au Haut experiences.

## **7. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public opinion survey revealed that Isle au Haut community members have several concerns related to transportation. A number of people expressed concern about the cost of mail boat tickets. Residents are also concerned about cars left indefinitely in the parking lot near the public landing on Isle au Haut. Though traffic is generally light, a number of respondents noted that speed is an issue, especially near Annis hill and the pond. There is increased traffic in the summer. Year round residents commented that winter road maintenance needs improvement. Lastly a majority of respondents recognized a need to remove derelict cars, but there is a lack of support for the use of public money to do so.

## **8. *Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to work with the Isle au Haut Boat Company to provide regular, affordable, safe and convenient transportation between Isle au Haut and Stonington.
2. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to work with the town of Stonington to ensure an adequate landing area for barges.
3. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain a safe public landing area for the docking of boats and landing of barges.
4. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain safe roadways during all seasons of the year.
5. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to ensure and encourage a safe number and proper disposal of vehicles on Isle au Haut.
6. It shall be the policy of Isle au Haut to maintain safe, adequate and environmentally friendly parking at the Isle au Haut town landing, and work with the town of Stonington to ensure safe and affordable parking for Isle au Haut community members.

### **Strategy**

1. The town, through the selectmen, will work with the board of the Isle au Haut Boat Company to ensure that the mail boat is meeting the needs of the Year Round community on Isle au Haut. Timeframe: ongoing through periodic meetings
2. The board of selectmen shall form a town landing taskforce. Time Frame: 2012.

3. The town, through the select board, shall enforce parking ordinances at the town dock and investigate options for expanding the parking area to accommodate some long-term parking. Ongoing enforcement, investigation 2012.
4. The town of Isle au Haut shall work with the town of Stonington to ensure that there are affordable parking options in Stonington for Isle au Haut residents.  
Timeframe: ongoing.
5. The town, through the road commissioner, shall continue to maintain the public roadways on Isle au Haut in a safe condition through out the year. Time frame: ongoing.
6. The town shall implement a deposit policy to ensure the proper removal of cars from the island at the end of their useful life. Timeframe: 2012.
7. The town of Isle au Haut will work with the towns of Stonington and Deer Isle to address regional traffic concerns. Timeframe: ongoing.
8. Town landing taskforce shall oversee the creation of a sign at the town landing with road and dock rules. Timeframe: 2011.
9. The Isle au Haut representatives to the Colwell Ramp Committee shall ensure that the ramp and its management are meeting the needs of Isle au Haut residents.  
Timeframe: ongoing.

## **E. Public Facilities and Services**

### **1. Purpose**

A town's public facilities provide support to the town's community. This includes administration, solid waste, emergency services, educational services, public works, and other support services. An inventory is necessary to determine if the present level of services is appropriate for current and future conditions, and what changes, if any, are necessary for an efficient system in the future. This section accomplishes the following:

- a. Identifies and describes public facilities and services available within the town of Isle au Haut
- b. Assesses the adequacy of these services to handle current and projected demands
- c. Discusses relevant policies and strategies.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Isle au Haut is governed by a board of selectmen and an annual town meeting. Some of the positions are paid a small stipend, but most are volunteers. Those community members participating in town government are spread thin. The division of labor is a major concern. This applies to government, planning board, school board and emergency services.

Isle au Haut's school system serves grades K-8 and the decreasing enrollment is also a concern.

A new dock was constructed in 2009. This provides public access to the water and serves as the landing area for the mail boat. The new dock addresses a major concern identified in the public opinion survey.

There is public concern about the fire protection and emergency services capacity.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

The 2007 public opinion survey asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with island services. Most services were rated as "good" or "excellent". Fire Protection was the area of greatest concern. Overall 42 percent of respondents felt that fire protection needs improvement. Of year round respondents, 81 percent rated fire protection as needing improvement. Written comments suggest that the volunteer fire department lacks some basic gear. Forest fire is also a worry.

Thirty-Six percent of the respondents rated the town dock as needing improvement. Construction on a new dock was completed in November of 2009.

The past lack of a code enforcement officer has hindered the enforcement of zoning ordinances. The public opinion survey suggests that a majority of respondents would favor a reexamination of the zoning ordinances.

## **4. Overview of Existing Conditions**

### **4.1 Administration and Town Hall**

The town of Isle au Haut is governed by a town meeting form of government with an elected board of three selectmen. The board of selectmen, town clerk, assessors, treasurer, tax collector, road commissioner, fire chief, school board members, and planning board members are elected at town meeting, while other positions are appointed by the selectmen. Town members also vote on budgets for the school, town administration, road maintenance, etc. Town positions are filled by approximately 25 people, filling about 50 positions. Due to the tiny population of active community members, parents must be on the school board, contractors on the planning board etc. Board members often have to abstain from voting because they are too close to a project (even the one submitting the permit request).

A planning board approves building permits and subdivisions. Planning board members and planning board of appeals members are elected for four-year terms. Until recently Isle au Haut had no code enforcement officer, which has prevented the enforcement of zoning ordinances.

The town office is located in Revere Memorial Hall. The town hall also includes a large space with a stage that can be used as an auditorium or gymnasium. The Revere Memorial Library is also housed in the hall. The library includes more than 4,000 volumes. Library coffee hours are an important social opportunity and a book discussion group meets once a month. Wireless internet access and a photo copier are also available at the town hall.

Respondents of the public opinion survey rated town office services positively, with 55 percent rating the services as either “good” or “excellent.” Twenty-four percent rated the services as “needs improvement”. The most common negative comment mentioned was a delay in the deposit of property tax checks. This problem has been addressed since the survey.

### **4.2 Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling**

Isle au Haut contracts for most household solid waste disposal and recycling pick-up. Individuals must dispose of food waste and burn paper and wood waste. Number 2 plastic is recycled at the Stonington Transfer Station, where the rest of household trash is taken. Glass is disposed of on island in the gravel pit. The town budgeted \$22,000 for solid waste disposal in 2009. Isle au Haut’s solid waste production seems to be increasing. It should be noted that Isle au Haut’s recycling is limited by what is accepted at the Stonington Transfer Station.

Comments during the public opinion survey indicated that some residents would support more wide spread recycling efforts, though 72 percent of respondents rated trash collection and recycling as either “good” or “excellent.”

The public opinion comments also revealed that respondents feel that there is a problem with the disposal of old cars, appliances and other bulky waste on the island. However, comments also indicated that residents are reluctant to pay to dispose of other’s garbage.



### 4.3 Emergency Services

Isle au Haut has a volunteer fire department with an elected fire chief. Most of the community serves as volunteer fire fighters in the event of an emergency. A Ford F350 first-responder truck was purchased in 2007. The fire engine underwent major repairs in 2008. The town has a firehouse to store trucks and equipment. There are currently no hydrants on the Island. Fire alarm is spread to pagers through Knox County 911 service, an on-island phone tree and VHF channel 74. The fire department is funded through the town and private donations. A private donor donated a fire engine and tank truck. Currently Isle au Haut is rated as ISO 10, and working to a rating of ISO 9, which could result in lower fire insurance rates. The fire department has also organized fire extinguisher inspection and firefighter trainings. The fire chief is responsible for periodically checking the trucks to ensure that they are fueled and operational.

As of 2011, Isle au Haut has two EMTs. Knox County 911 services can reach them through pagers. Transport to the mainland is by private boat, mail boat or life flight. In the event of transport by boat, an ambulance will meet the boat in Stonington.

Isle au Haut has no on-island police force, but Knox County Sheriff will respond if necessary. One of the rangers is a federal law enforcement agent, but his jurisdiction does not extend beyond the Park's boundaries. This ranger is available for emergencies.

The public opinion survey revealed a concern about fire protection services on the island. Overall, 42 percent rate Isle au Haut's fire protection services as "needing improvement". Of year round residents, this figure is higher, at 81 percent. Written comments indicate a concern about homeowners' insurance, forest fire, and a lack of proper equipment. There have been several upgrades in equipment since the survey.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents to the public opinion survey rate Emergency medical services either "good" or "excellent".

Fifty-one percent had no opinion of Isle au Haut's law enforcement services. However, a series of public meetings last summer indicate that there is increasing concern about law enforcement on Isle au Haut.

### 4.4 Education

Isle au Haut shares some administrative services with Deer Isle-Stonington (e.g. superintendent), but maintains its own school board. The Isle au Haut school provides education to students in grades K-8. High school students may attend high school at Deer Isle-Stonington, or other public or private schools of their choice. The town pays tuition equal to the cost of Deer Isle-Stonington. Students attending Deer Isle-Stonington may commute on the mail boat with a modified school schedule.

**Table E.1 Isle au Haut Rural School Enrollment**

Year	Enrollment
1996	10
1997	10
1998	12
1999	11
2000	9
2001	10
2002	8
2003	9
2004	10
2005	12
2006	6
2007	7
2008	8
2009	6

Table E.1 shows past enrollment at the Isle au Haut School. Current enrollment for the 2010-2011 school year is three, with no younger children waiting to start school. Please see the population and demographic section for more information. Three students currently attend high school off island. The Isle au Haut school employs one full time teacher and one full time ed. tech. Music, art, phys ed. and special education teachers work at the school part time.

The total operating budget for the 2009-2010 school year was \$259,757. Of this total, \$122,905 is the local share. The local share per K-12 pupil is \$9,454.23 (based on 13 students). Because of decreasing enrollment, the budget for 2010-2011 is nearly 10 percent less than the previous year.

Education costs are addressed further in the Fiscal Capacity section.

The public opinion survey showed great support for the Isle au Haut school with 67% of respondents rating the school as either “excellent” or “good”. Sixty-nine percent of year round residents who responded to the survey rated the school as “excellent”. The community is concerned about decreasing enrollment.

#### **4.5 Public Works**

Isle au Haut has no public water or sewer. Homes all have private wells and sewerage disposal systems. Drainage is accomplished through roadside ditches and culverts.

The town is responsible for about seven miles of 11 miles of road on the island. The remaining road is within Acadia National Park and maintained by the park service. It is not plowed during the winter. Parts of the town road are paved and parts are gravel. The condition of the road varies from good to poor. Please see the transportation section for more information.

#### **4.6 Health Services**

Isle au Haut does not have a clinic or hospital within the community. Telemedicine, through Maine Seacoast Mission’s *Sunbeam*, provides important medical care every two weeks. There are a number of doctors on island in the summer. Definitive care is located in Blue Hill or Ellsworth. Some residents use a primary care doctor at the Island Medical Center in Stonington.

### **5. Overview of Existing Regulations Governing Public Facilities and Services**

There are several local regulations governing the use of public facilities. There are restrictions for parking near the public landing, which are addressed in the transportation section. There are also guidelines for solid waste disposal and recycling, and rules of use of Revere Memorial Hall.

## **6. *Summary of Current Trends***

The new dock, constructed in the fall of 2009, has improved the major public access to the water, though such access is limited. School enrollment is decreasing which is a source of concern. The amount of solid waste produced has been increasing.

## **7. *Adequacy of Public Facilities and Services***

Residents are concerned about the adequacy of fire protection services. Occasionally, several positions within town government have not been filled. Other existing public facilities and services seem to be adequate for the existing population.

## **8. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public opinion survey and public discussions have identified several issues of concern. Most residents are satisfied with road maintenance, though a large group of mostly year round residents commented that winter sanding and plowing could be improved. Residents are concerned about the inadequacy of fire protection. Year round residents have noted a difficulty in filling town positions as the year round population shrinks. Enforcement of existing ordinances has been hindered by Isle au Haut's past lack of a code enforcement officer or other form of law enforcement. Lastly, the community is concerned with shrinking school enrollment.

## **9. *Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain public infrastructure, including town landing, pier, floats, ramps and roads at a safe and effective level.
2. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain effective and efficient town government.
3. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain Revere Memorial Hall in a safe and efficient condition.
4. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to support Revere Memorial Library.
5. It is the policy of Isle au Haut to provide fire and emergency medical services.
6. It is the policy of Isle au Haut to provide safe and efficient garbage and recyclables collection.
7. The town shall encourage the safe and proper disposal of bulky waste on Isle au Haut.
8. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to provide quality K-12 education.
9. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain postal services on the Island.
10. The town of Isle au Haut recognizes and supports the efforts of the Maine Seacoast Mission to provide telemedicine and community services to outer islands.

**Strategy**

1. The town shall begin to keep all records electronically. Timeframe: 2012.
2. The town, through the select board, shall ensure that Revere Memorial Hall has adequate lighting and is in good repair. Timeframe: ongoing.
3. The town shall fund a fire department and support several EMTs. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. The volunteer fire department will ensure that equipment is operational and hold periodic trainings. Timeframe: ongoing.
5. The fire department shall maintain an accurate phone tree for spreading alarm. Timeframe: ongoing.
6. The town shall work with the town of Stonington to improve solid waste disposal options. Timeframe: 2012.
7. The town shall implement a deposit policy to ensure the proper removal of cars from the island at the end of their useful life. Timeframe 2012.
8. The town shall investigate the local use of material recycled on the islands. Timeframe: 2012.
9. The town shall keep the Isle au Haut Rural School open regardless of enrollment. The school board should investigate magnet programs to help boost enrollment. Timeframe: 2011-2012.
10. The town and school committee shall support professional development and networking opportunities with other teachers on Maine's outer islands. Timeframe: ongoing.
11. The school shall continue to offer k-8 extra curricular activities such as music, sports and art both on the island and through distance technology. Timeframe: ongoing.
12. The town shall continue to retain housing for the schoolteacher. Time frame-ongoing.
13. The School committee shall ensure that the school building is safe, well maintained and efficient. Timeframe: ongoing.
14. The select board shall work with the US postal Service to maintain the Isle au Haut Post Office. Timeframe: ongoing.
15. The select board shall maintain ties to the Maine Island Coalition and appoint representatives. Timeframe: ongoing.

## **F. Recreation and Open Space**

### **1. *Introduction***

Recreation facilities and opportunities can contribute to an overall sense of community and make a town an attractive and pleasant place to live. This section describes the current recreation services and facilities available on Isle au Haut, their current adequacy, and how these services might need to change in the future to accommodate future development. This section also addresses land conservation and open space. Policies and strategies are discussed.

### **2. *Key Findings and Issues***

Recreation on Isle au Haut is largely informal. The school, town hall and community organizations provide a number of recreational opportunities and facilities. The outdoors provides great recreation opportunities on Isle au Haut. Land conservation is important to the community, with many acres of land already protected for public use through Acadia National Park, the Town or Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Though conservation land is valued, there is also a sentiment that the town cannot afford to lose any more land from the tax rolls, and affordable housing should be the priority on any present or future town owned land.

### **3. *Public Opinion Survey Results***

The public opinion survey asked no specific questions about recreation, but conservation was addressed. A majority of residents favor the conservation scenic places and open spaces, though comments suggest that the Island has already conserved many acres of land. Public opinion comments acknowledged the importance of maintaining access to the shore and scenic places. Narrative comments suggest that Long Pond, trails to scenic sites, such as Boom Beach and Trial Point, and Acadia National Park lands are valuable recreation resources. Several comments favored the creation of some sort of community center.

### **4. *Overview of Existing Recreational Resources***

The natural landscape of Isle au Haut provides a rich number of recreational activities like hiking, swimming, fishing and boating. The town hall and the school also offer recreational facilities.

#### **4.1 Facilities**

Revere Memorial Hall houses Isle au Haut's library and a large space that can be used as an auditorium or gymnasium. Volleyball is especially popular, as well as basketball and exercise classes. The hall has recently acquired a projector for community movie nights. A small playground is located on school grounds. A private field near the church and school is used for softball and other activities.

## **4.2 Recreational Programs and Activities**

Most recreational activities on Isle au Haut are informal. For example, if people are interested in playing volleyball, a group might meet weekly to play at the town hall. Game nights and potluck dinners are also popular. The library hosts weekly coffee hours and a book club meets monthly. The Maine Sea Coast Mission, through the *Sunbeam* provides additional recreation opportunities.

## **4.3 Public Access to Salt Water**

Public access to salt water is limited to the town landing. This is the only place on Isle au Haut available to launch a large boat from a trailer.

## **4.4 Acadia National Park and other conservation land**

Acadia National Park owns more than 3,200 acres on Isle au Haut with five lean-tos (a maximum of six people can sleep in each lean-to) and 18 miles of hiking trails. Land was donated to the Park in 1943. ANP attracts 6,000-7,000 visitors annually. The trails are used by visitors and residents alike.

A number of hiking trails cross private land to reach the ocean and mountains. The landowners allow these trails to be used as long as visitors are courteous. Map 7 shows the conservation land within the town of Isle au Haut. Note that this data is as of early 2009 and may not include recent acquisitions (for example the land on Bungees Head). These holdings include both fee simple and easement parcels. Most of the conservation land is part of Acadia National Park. Note that many of the hiking trails cross private land. These trails are informally maintained.

The Isle au Haut Land Conservation Trust was established in the 1980s and has been dormant for nearly thirty years. The committee is made up of the chairman of the planning board, a representative from Acadia National Park, a selectman, and a community member. It is available to hold easements.

## **4.5 Long Pond**

Long Pond provides swimming, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and skating opportunities for the community. The public opinion survey indicates a concern that motorized recreation may become more popular and should be restricted or banned from the pond. The State of Maine stocks Long Pond with Brook Trout. Acadia National Park owns land on the northwest side of the pond. There is a public swimming beach at the southern end, which is owned by the Trustees of the Isle au Haut Congregational Church. Negotiations are ongoing with the Town to convey the beach area to the Town. Parking is limited around beach area and the public opinion survey indicated some concern about traffic around this area in the summer.

# **5. Overview of Existing Regulations**

Maine State Law guarantees shore access only for “fishing, fowling, or navigational purposes”. Courts have supported private property rights to restrict access for other uses. The present land use ordinance does not address the issue of access to the ocean over private property and historically it has not been a concern.

## **6. *Summary of Current Trends***

The natural landscape provides important recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Isle au Haut. This includes hiking, biking, kayaking, and nature watching. Access to some popular recreation areas is granted by private citizens. Public access to salt water is limited to the public landing. Other recreation activities are largely informal. Community members recognize the importance of conservation, but also note that much of the Island is already conserved through Acadia National Park or other organizations.

## **7. *Current and Future Adequacy of Recreational Resources***

If the population does not significantly grow, recreation resources are adequate, though there is some interest in the development of a community center or some sort of a place where people could meet informally. Access to some popular scenic spots could be lost if ownership changes.

## **8. *Issues of Public Concern***

Comments on the public opinion survey indicated a concern that access to scenic places could be lost if ownership of private land changes. Several respondents expressed an interest in the creation of some sort of a community center. Public access to salt water is limited.

## **9. *Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It is the policy of Isle au Haut to maintain the facilities at Revere Memorial Hall including the gymnasium, library and reading room.
2. It shall be the policy of Isle au Haut to work to maintain public access to significant local scenic areas.
3. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to protect the natural ecosystems of the town, especially the water quality of Long Pond.
4. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain public access to Long Pond and the shore.

### **Strategy**

1. The town shall continue to appropriate funds to keep Revere Memorial Hall in good condition and make improvements where necessary. The town should pursue alternate funding for major improvements. Timeframe: ongoing.
2. The Isle au Haut Land Conservation Trust is available to hold conservation easements on key parcels. Timeframe: ongoing.
3. The planning board and code enforcement officer will enforce shoreland zoning ordinances to protect water quality. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. The Town of Isle au Haut shall work with Maine Fisheries and Wildlife to continue stocking Long Pond. Timeframe: ongoing.

## **G. Agricultural and Forest Resources**

### **1. *Purpose***

This section describes Isle au Haut's farm and forest lands and determines the extent of the future threats to this resource. It also evaluates the effectiveness of existing measures to protect existing agriculture and forest resources. Policies and Strategies are discussed.

### **2. *Key Findings and Issues***

Agriculture and forestry are currently minor resources on Isle au Haut. There are small pockets of agricultural soils, but these are spread over numerous parcels. The forest on Isle au Haut is softwood, in the form of mature spruce. It is unhealthy and prone to windfall. There is public concern about wildfire risk.

### **3. *Public Opinion Survey Results***

Only one question on the public opinion survey, which asked the respondents to rate the desirability of agricultural enterprises, directly related to agriculture and forestry on Isle au Haut. More than 70 percent of respondents rate agricultural business as highly or somewhat favorable, though some respondents comment that such ventures are impractical. Though no questions directly addressed island forestry, several respondents expressed concern about forest fire risk and the large amount of down dead wood.

### **4. *Overview of Existing Conditions***

#### **4.1 *Agricultural Resources***

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) there are small pockets of prime agricultural soils and soils classified "soils of statewide importance" on Isle au Haut. It must be emphasized that these pockets are small and fairly dispersed. There are no commercial farms on the island and no parcels are classified as farmland under current use taxation programs. Note that two parcels are classified as open space. Map 8 shows the prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide importance. Historically, grazing was a major agricultural enterprise, with sheep on Isle au Haut and a number of the outer islands. Presently, small private vegetable gardens are common, though deer and shallow soil are challenges for gardeners.

There is currently no formal community garden, but there is informal sharing of garden resources as well as a shared garden at the school. Black Dinah Chocolatiers has hosted a small farmers' market.



## **4.2 Forest Resources**

Much of Isle au Haut is forested. Mature white spruce is the most common tree species, though there are pockets of other species. Soft wood, coniferous trees are more common than hardwood deciduous trees. Other tree species include red oak, red maple, pitch pine, and tamarack.

The Maine Forest Service reports no significant harvests between 1991 and 2008. However, confidentiality dictates that harvests will only be reported if more than three landowners have harvested. This is unlikely in a community as small as Isle au Haut. The cost of transport off island does not make harvesting on Isle au Haut cost effective.

As of 2008, eight parcels (1232.78 acres) are enrolled in the tree growth current use taxation program. Of this, 1038.71 acres are softwood, 173.97 acres are mixed, and 30.10 acres are hardwood.

## **5. Overview of Regulations Governing Agricultural and Forest Resources**

### **5.1 State Regulations**

The state current use taxation programs allow lands engaged in agriculture and forestry (along with commercial fishing and open space) to be assessed at a lower value. The discounted rate is based on the parcel's value in its "current use" instead of "highest and best" use. If a parcel is prematurely removed from such a program, landowners must pay a penalty in form of the unpaid taxes.

Shoreland zoning ordinances restrict agriculture and forestry operations close to water bodies.

### **5.2 Local Regulations**

Municipal zoning regulations limit agricultural and forestry activities and restrict agriculture and timber harvesting in Zone E (Resource Protection).

## **6. Summary of Current Trends**

There is little large-scale agriculture or commercial forest management on Isle au Haut. There are small areas of prime agricultural soils over a number of parcels, but none is currently used in production beyond a kitchen garden.

The forest on Isle au Haut is predominantly unhealthy mature spruce. It is prone to windfall. There is concern about wildfire risk.

## **7 Threats to Forest Resources**

There are a number of threats to Isle au Haut's forest resources. The Island is prone to strong winds and ice storms, which have damaged forests in the past. Insects and tree diseases also pose a threat to Isle au Haut's forests. Bark beetle and dwarf mistletoe, which causes "witch's brooms," are both common blights. Acid rain has also damaged the forest on Isle au Haut.

Fire is another threat to Isle au Haut's forest and could also cause property damage and personal injury. There have been three wildfires on Isle au Haut since 1990, which burned 3.2 acres and cost at least \$2,397. One of these fires was caused by the

burning of debris, while the other two were caused by cigarettes. The Maine Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Community at Risk Hazard Assessment and Mitigation Strategies Report (2009) found that Isle au Haut falls in the high-risk category. Most of the buildings included in this study lacked a defensible space of more than 30 feet, and most buildings have only one, narrow access way with no turnaround. Coniferous trees burn more quickly and intensely than deciduous hardwood trees. The large amounts brush and grasses near structures and along the road would help spread the fire.

## **8. *Adequacy of Existing Protection Measures***

There is concern about the adequacy of fire prevention measures. Currently, Isle au Haut lacks a fire warden. The WUI analysis suggests that property on Isle au Haut is at risk from damage from wildfires.

## **9. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public opinion survey expressed concern about the overall health of Isle au Haut's forests and risk of wild fire damage.

## **10. *Polices and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to reduce the forest fire risk.
2. It is the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage agricultural enterprises.

### **Strategy**

1. The town will work with the fire department, National Park Service, landowners, and power company to reduce the amount of dead down wood. Timeframe: ongoing.
2. The fire department will hold public fire safety educational sessions, including wild land fire prevention practices. Timeframe: periodically.
3. The volunteer fire department will ensure that equipment is operational and hold periodic trainings. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. Isle au Haut's planning board will consult with Maine's Forest Service and Knox County's Soil and Water Conservation District when re-evaluating zoning ordinances. Timeframe: ongoing.
5. The planning board and code enforcement officer will ensure that all forest harvests are conducted in a manner that protects water quality and prevents erosion. Timeframe: ongoing.

## H. Historic and Archaeological Resources

### 1. *Purpose*

This section outlines the history of the town of Isle au Haut, identifies the different types of historic and archaeological resources, and evaluates their significance. It also assesses current and future threats and the effectiveness of the current measures to protect these resources. Policies and Strategies are discussed.

### 2. *Key Findings and Issues*

Isle au Haut has a rich history, with numerous historic and prehistoric archeological sites. There is one property on the National Register of Historic Places, and numerous properties of local interest. The town's historical collections committee has collected photographs, documents, artifacts and oral histories.

### 3. *Public Opinion Survey Results*

The public opinion survey found that 88 percent of respondents were interested in protecting historic properties.

### 4. *Overview of Existing Conditions*

#### 4.1 **Town History**

Isle au Haut is located in Eastern Penobscot Bay, about seven miles south of Stonington on Deer Isle. The town of Isle au Haut includes the main island as well as smaller islands south of Merchant's Row. Although people have lived year round on some of the smaller islands in the past, currently only the large main island has a year round population. Isle au Haut's proximity to deepwater fishing grounds made it an attractive settlement location. As early as three thousand years ago, Native Americans traveled to Isle au Haut in the summer for fishing and hunting. Shell middens near the coast attest to this use. By the early seventeenth century, English and French explorers made their way to Penobscot Bay. Samuel de Champlain named the island "Isle Haute" as the Island's mountains cause it to stand above its neighbors. In 1792 Peletiah Barter became the first permanent settler after he was granted a parcel of land by Massachusetts, which at that time included what is now Maine. By 1832, 75 families lived on Isle au Haut, many taking advantage of the Island's convenient fishing location. Settlers fished for mackerel, cod, and later, lobster. A lobster cannery was built in the Thoroughfare in the 1860s. During the off-season, fishermen built boats. Small-scale subsistence farming was also present on the Island. By the end of the nineteenth century nearly, 300 people lived on Isle au Haut year round. At this point Isle au Haut was no longer part of Deer Isle, and the town of Isle au Haut was incorporated in 1874.

By the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the year round population of Isle au Haut started to decline. This decline was mainly spurred by advances in the internal combustion engine, which allowed fishermen to reach the remote fishing grounds from the mainland. Railroads and improved road systems decreased the importance of coastal

shipping. Lobster stocks were also in decline. By 1910, the population fell to 178 year round residents. Thirty-Five families depended on fishing. The Island had three general stores and two boarding houses in operation. The population continued to fall. By 1970, the year round population was 45. Current residents remember times during the 1970s when the population was as low as 17.

While the year round population was decreasing, the seasonal population was increasing. Summer resorts and cottage colonies became popular around the end of the nineteenth century. The first summer colony was developed at Point Lookout. The increase in summer visitors led to changes on the Island; a road and town hall were built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Caretaking became a common off-season occupation for fishermen.

In the 1940s, the Bowditch heirs donated a significant part of the Island to Acadia National Park. This increased Isle au Haut's popularity as a tourist destination and caused friction with island residents. In the early 1980s a series of land swaps consolidated the park holdings to the southwestern portion of the Island, and federal legislation fixed the park's boundaries at their present state.

Automobiles first came to Isle au Haut in 1914. Electricity came to the Island in 1971 and phone service followed in 1988, after much organization from island residents and summer residents.

Historically settlement has occurred in six pockets on the main island: Town near the Thoroughfare, the seasonal Point Lookout at the north end, Rich's Cove on the north east side, Head Harbor at the south end, Duck Harbor and Moore's Harbor, both on the west side. These settlements reflect the economic dependence on the water for fishing. Most of these settlements are sheltered harbors. York Island and Merchant Island each once had large enough populations to support schools. Map 2 shows this settlement pattern.

## **4.2 Identified Historic and Archaeological Sites**

Map 9 shows the approximate location of Maine Historical Preservation Commission identified sites.

### **4.2.1 Federally Recognized Historic Sites**

The Isle au Haut Light Station on Robinson Point is the only property in Isle au Haut currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is in good condition. The town organizes a lighthouse committee with members elected at town meeting or appointed by the selectmen. The other buildings associated with the lighthouse are in good condition and owned privately.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends a comprehensive survey of Isle au Haut's Historic above ground resources to identify other eligible properties.

### **4.2.2 State Recognized Prehistoric Sites**

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has identified 50 prehistoric sites, or sites that predate written history. These sites are located along the shore or on rocky cliffs overlooking the shore. Shell middens make up nearly half of the sites. Several sites near Duck Harbor were quarries for bedrock material to make stone tools. As of May 1

2008, two-thirds of the shoreline has been surveyed at the reconnaissance level. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends a survey of the remaining shoreline, as well as an intensive survey of the town.

#### 4.2.3 State Identified Historic Sites

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has identified 25 historic archaeological sites within the town of Isle au Haut. Table H.1 lists these sites. Eleven of these sites are shipwrecks, while the others are historic buildings, settlement sites or structures. As of 2010, no in depth historic archaeological analysis has been conducted. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission recommends that future field work should focus on the mid eighteenth century settlements as well as early industrial, residential and agricultural sites. Map 9 shows the approximate location of identified sites.

Site	Type	Time Period
"New Boxer"	American wreck, schooner	Jan. 5, 1912.
"Mabel"	American wreck, schooner	Oct., 1890.
Hamilton/campground	American domestic	Mid-19th c. - 3rd quarter 20th c.
Hamilton	American domestic	Mid-19th century - 20th century
Hamilton Cemetery	American cemetery	1887 or earlier-1919
"Mary Powers"	American wreck, schooner	1885
"Lizzie W. Hunt"	American wreck, schooner	1879-1906
"Sunny Region"	Canadian wreck, bark	1877
"Catherine D. Enos"	American wreck, gas screw	1904-1912
"George Gress"	American wreck, schooner	1885 - Sept, 1940
Eli Creek Cove House	Anglo-American domestic	Probably Late 19th c to early 20th c
Moore's Cabin	American domestic, cabin	Early 20th century to present
Ebenezer Leland	American settlement	Late 18th c to late 19th c
"A. Gibson"	Canadian wreck, schooner	October 1889
"C.T.W."	Canadian wreck, schooner	October, 1917
"Carrie"	Canadian wreck, vessel	July [1910?]
"Frank H. Wilson"	Canadian wreck, schooner	1878
"Duroe"	American wreck, schooner	May 10, 1890
Merchants Cove	American domestic	Established ca. 1820 to 1840
Duck Harbor Mt	American structure,	Unidentified nineteenth century?
W.H. Harvey	American domestic	19th century
Moore's Harbor unknown	American domestic	Ca. 1882
Moore's Harbor stone pile	American structure,	Unidentified nineteenth century?
Moore's Harbor marsh rd	American road	Ca. 1880
Ely Creek House 2	American domestic	Nineteenth century

**Table H.1 Historic Archaeological Sites**

#### 4.3 Locally recognized historic sites

Other historic buildings include the Church (circa 1857) and the town hall (circa 1906). The Church is in good condition and care is overseen by a committee. The town hall is also in good condition, with a maintenance budget. The roofing was replaced in 2009.

Several schoolhouses exist on the Island. One is in use currently and was built in 1910. The two remaining structures are located in Head Harbor and Turner's Cove (Nineteenth Century). The Turner's Cove schoolhouse is currently a privately owned seasonal rental and is in good condition. The Head Harbor School house is owned by the town and rented as a residence. It is in poor condition.

Other individual houses may have historic value and potential maintenance issues. These are all privately owned.

#### **4.4 Town Historical Collections**

The town has an active historical collections committee. The organization has worked to gather oral histories from long time residents and collect photographs, ephemera and artifacts related to Isle au Haut. The organization identified island cemeteries and created a database with GPS coordinates. It hopes to create a similar database with information about buildings. Members are in the process of scanning town reports and documents. Materials are currently housed in the library and reading room.

### **5. *Existing Regulations Governing Historic and Archaeological Resources***

#### **5.1 Federal Regulation**

Only one Island property (the lighthouse) is listed on the National Register. It should be noted that listing on the National Register does not restrict what the property owner may do to the property. It does, however, offer greater protection against demolition by state or federal agencies.

#### **5.2 State Regulation**

Several state laws regulate the use of historic and archaeological resources. These laws generally restrict the actions of projects funded by federal or state money.

#### **5.3 Local Regulation**

There are currently no ordinances in place to address historic or archaeological resources.

### **6. *Adequacy of Existing Protection Measures***

MHPC recommends a more detailed survey of both historic and archeological resources.

### **7. *Threats to Historic and Prehistoric Sites***

The major threat to historic and prehistoric sites is inadvertent damage through new development because the sites may be unidentified. Until recently, the town's planning board currently lacked a code enforcement officer to enforce any ordinances and guidelines to protect such sites.

## **8      *Issues of Public Concern***

Residents have expressed an interest in continuing the collection of oral histories to capture the flavor and stories of the past. There is some interest in establishing a permanent location for Isle au Haut's historical collections.

## **9.      *Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It is the policy of the Town of Isle au Haut to protect significant historic and archeological resources within the town.

### **Strategy**

1. The town shall continue to support the work of the Historical Collections Committee. Timeframe: ongoing.
2. The Historical Collections Committee shall continue scanning and protecting archival documents and photographs. Timeframe: 2011.
3. The Historical Collections Committee shall work to identify key cultural resources, and ensure that this information is available to town and planning board. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. The planning board will investigate ordinances to protect cultural resources. Timeframe: 2011-2012.

## **I. Water Resources**

### **1. Purpose**

This section describes the quality and characteristics of Isle au Haut's water resources. It also addresses suitable uses, and to what extent the quality or quantity of the water resources will be threatened by future land uses. This section also assesses the adequacy of existing water protection measures. Policies and strategies are discussed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Map 10 shows the important water resources on Isle au Haut. Water resources are valued by the community. Wetlands provide important habitat and help regulate water levels. Long Pond provides vital recreational opportunities in addition to wildlife habitat.

Most of Isle au Haut's residents depend on ground water, while others rely on surface water for household use. The quality of the pond, streams and wetlands are at risk from increased development. Care should be taken in new construction to reduce sedimentation and impervious surface run-off. The public opinion survey suggested public concern about the water quality of the pond. A recent ground water survey noted that more residents should test their drinking water for arsenic. Existing ordinances should be enforced by a code enforcement officer.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

The public opinion survey asked residents to rate their satisfaction with the water quality of Long Pond, and the recreation opportunities available on Long Pond. A majority of respondents, 55 percent, are satisfied with the water quality of Long Pond. More year round residents (75 percent) rate water quality as satisfactory than seasonal residents (52 percent). A number of narrative comments reflect that people have heard or witnessed something to indicate that the water quality of the pond is deteriorating. These comments also reflect a fear that the water quality of the pond will be threatened by future development. Overall, residents are satisfied with recreational opportunities on Long Pond.

A separate survey gathered information about ground water. This survey indicated that the quality and quantity of ground water is generally good. These results are discussed in depth in the ground water section.

### **4. Ponds and Watersheds**

Long Pond, or Turner's Lake, (MIDAS 5562) is Isle au Haut's only inland freshwater body. It is a Great Pond (inland water bodies greater than 10 acres in size held in trust by the State of Maine) with an area of 63 acres. The perimeter is 14,363 feet. The average depth is 23 feet and the maximum depth is 59 feet. It is more than 1 mile long. Long Pond is home to American eel, brook trout, golden shiner, ninespine stickleback and rainbow smelt. Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (ME IF&W)



currently stocks the pond with brook trout, and have stocked landlocked salmon and rainbow trout in the past. Its total drainage area is 0.48 square miles. There is no dam present on the pond. Water quality data is lacking. As of 1994, the lake had a mean secchi reading of 8 meters. Secchi is a measure of clarity. This reading means that the secchi disk is visible as deep as 8 meters. It is currently considered mesotrophic. A mesotrophic lake is defined as moderately productive, with a moderate level of nutrients. Long Pond is valued by the community both for its natural beauty and its recreation uses.

## **5. *Freshwater Wetlands***

Isle au Haut has numerous inland wetlands, which provide important habitats for birds and plants, as well as water filtration and flood protection services. In addition to these wetlands, there are many vernal pools and seasonal wetlands. Map 10 shows the palustrine wetlands on Isle au Haut. These include marshes, swamps, bogs and fens with salts in concentration of less than 0.05 percent. These wetlands are addressed in more detail in the Critical Natural Resources section.

## **6. *Streams***

Isle au Haut has numerous brooks and streams. Most are small and the flow is seasonally variable. According to Maine Department of Environmental Protection, these streams are in classification “B”. Class B waters “are general-purpose waters and are managed to attain good quality water; aquatic life use goal approximately Tier 3 on the Biological Condition Gradient. Well-treated discharges with ample dilution are allowed.” Several of these streams, including Barter’s Creek and Eli’s Creek are notably scenic.

## **7. *Coastal Wetlands***

Coastal (saltwater) wetlands are shown in map 10. These wetlands are important spawning grounds for marine life and Habitat for waterfowl. They help protect against coastal flooding. The islands’ natural resources are addressed at greater length in the Critical Natural Resources section.

## **8. *Flood Hazard Areas***

Isle au Haut is susceptible to coastal flooding. Map 11 shows areas susceptible to hurricane inundation. The town is not a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Storm water run-off after major weather events does periodically damage roadways, especially near Moore’s Harbor and within Acadia National Park.

## **9. *Groundwater***

Sebago Technics conducted a survey in 2009, in which 58 households responded. Respondents report some flowing artesian wells. Twelve of these wells are dug, which can be dependable water sources if saturated soil is significantly deep and the well has a sufficient recharge area. Dug wells, however, have a greater potential for bacterial contamination than drilled wells. Isle au Haut’s soils generally rate low in permeability, so dug wells on the Island should be considered “low yield”.

Most of the wells on the island are drilled. The highest yield well reported a yield of 30 gpm. Wells are considered “high yield” with a yield of 10 gpm. The median yield of participating wells in the Cranberry Island volcanic tuffs and rhyolite bedrock (near town) is 5gpm, which is typical of coastal Maine. The median yield of those in the gabbro and diorite bedrock (on the east side) is 15 gpm. The high yield wells are not necessarily located where data analysis might suggest. Most drilled wells on Isle au Haut would be considered shallow in other coastal Maine towns. The deepest drilled well on Isle au Haut is 350 feet.

Of the 58 households that responded, 29 reported water tests for particular contaminants. Three wells reported water tests at one point indicating excessive bacteria, which is fewer than other coastal towns. Ten households reported tests that indicated high iron and/or manganese. One household noted high radon levels. Sebago Technics suggest that households should test their wells for arsenic.

Only one household participating in the survey reported saltwater intrusion in their well, and anecdotal evidence suggests that there may be one or two more instances of this. Wells drilled on land facing open-ocean and located on a point or peninsula are at a higher risk for salt water intrusion. Fifty percent of the wells have static groundwater levels within four feet of the ground surface.

Sebago Technics noted that existing soil maps lack accuracy and recommend additional soil and bedrock mapping for more detailed ground water planning. However, they note that there is “more than ample groundwater available to serve the current and reasonably foreseeable needs of the island population”.

## ***10. Public Water Systems***

Isle au Haut has one public well located at the ranger station near the public landing. Public wells do not have to be publicly owned, but must serve a certain number of the public. Owners and operators of the public water systems must be notified of land use decisions that could affect the quality of the public water. Map 12 shows the location of the public water system and notable land use activity (as of April 2008).

## ***11. Regional Considerations***

Because Isle au Haut is an island, there are few regional water issues.

## ***12. Adequacy of Existing Protection Measures***

Isle au Haut’s town zoning ordinances and state shoreland zoning regulations are designed to protect water resources; however, the adequacy of the existing measures is unclear because of lack of enforcement. Land use restrictions are the strictest in the resource protection zones and the remote shoreland areas. Respondents to the public opinion survey expressed concern about increased residential development near the pond in the accessible shoreland zone. The minimum lot size of the accessible shoreland zone is only 0.25 acres. The public opinion survey indicated some community concern about this zone. Practically, Maine shoreland zoning and septic system requirements increases this minimum.

### **13. *Threats to Water Resources***

Non-point source pollution is a major threat to water quality. This pollution occurs when water runs over paved or bare ground, carrying sediments, nutrients and other pollutants to the water. Overboard discharges in the Thorough Fare are among the few “point” source pollutants within Isle au Haut.

### **14. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public opinion survey suggests that members of the community are concerned about the water quality of the lake. Additional water monitoring could help address these concerns. The geology suggests that homeowners should test their water for arsenic. The effectiveness of shoreland zoning depends on enforcement.

### **15. *Polices and Strategies***

#### **Policy**

1. It is the policy of the Town of Isle au haut to maintain the quality and quantity of the fresh water resources of Isle au Haut, including the pond, ground water, wetlands, marshes and brooks.

#### **Strategy**

1. The road commissioner and planning board shall use and encourage the use of best management practices in all roadwork and construction. Timeframe: ongoing.
2. The town shall cooperate with Acadia National Park to continue to monitor the water quality of Long Pond. Timeframe: Ongoing.
3. The planning board and code enforcement officer shall enforce shoreland zoning ordinances. Timeframe: ongoing.
4. The planning board shall require that all subdivision and site plan review applicants demonstrate that their developments will not have an adverse impact on ground water quality and quantity. Timeframe: ongoing.
5. The town will properly store and encourage the proper storage of toxins and pollutants. Timeframe ongoing.
6. The planning board shall review its Floodplain Management Ordinances and update it as necessary to be consistent with state and federal standards. Timeframe: 2012.
7. The planning board will review and consider amending local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate low impact development standards. Timeframe: 2012.
8. The town, through select board or designee, shall make information about arsenic and water testing available to community members. Timeframe: 2012.
9. The town, through the select board or designee, shall investigate participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Timeframe: 2012.

## **J. Critical Natural Resources and Habitat**

### **1. Purpose**

This section describes the characteristics and significance of Isle au Haut's critical natural resources. It assesses the effectiveness of existing protection measures and determines the extent of future threats to the island's critical natural resources. Policies and strategies are also discussed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

The coasts, wetlands, marshes, forests and islands of Isle au Haut are home to a number of rare plants and animals. The islands are important stopping point for migratory birds. There are several bald eagle nests. The only colony of inkberry in Maine is found on Isle au Haut. The ocean cliffs and mountains of Isle au Haut afford countless scenic views. The park holdings and other conservation land provide large blocks of uninterrupted habitat. Other notable issues include the island's deer population, the control of invasive species, and (simultaneously) maintaining the both the island's wild character and the year round community.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

The public opinion survey revealed that the community highly values the natural beauty of the island: 95 percent of the respondents rate natural beauty of the island as "very important". A majority of respondents favor the preservation of scenic places, open spaces and wooded spaces; though in each case, a larger number of seasonal residents support these conservation efforts than year round residents.

Current zoning concentrates development in existing settlements. This helps to maintain important uninterrupted habitats. A majority of respondents favor this zoning, though 78 percent of the seasonal respondents favor this type of development compared to 58 percent of the year round residents.

There are a number of nonnative invasive plant species on Isle au Haut, including Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, bush honeysuckle, Norway maple, and bittersweet. Seventy-nine percent of respondents favor the control of invasive plants. There is no difference in the response between seasonal and year round populations.

Control of the deer population has proved to be a more controversial issue. A majority (71 percent) of seasonal residents favor the control of the deer population, while only 31 percent of the year round population would favor such control. Narrative comments suggest a concern about ticks and Lyme disease, as well the destruction caused by deer. The deer eat both native wild plants as well as cultivated gardens.

### **4. Overview of Existing Conditions and Data**

Isle au Haut has many significant natural resources, including shorebird and migratory waterfowl habitat, freshwater and salt-water wetlands, bald eagle nesting areas and rare plant communities. The town has numerous scenic views.

#### **4.1 Deer Wintering Areas**

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) data show that there are no recognized deer wintering areas on Isle au Haut. There is currently no legal deer season on Isle au Haut and the deer population is large. Seasonal respondents favor actions by the town to control the deer population, but fewer year round respondents share this view. Residents are concerned about Lyme disease.

#### **4.2 Bald Eagles**

There are several bald eagle nest sites within the borders of Isle au Haut. These nests are shown on Map 13. The bald eagle was delisted from the State's endangered and threatened species list in 2009 after the State's population had improved. The nests had been considered "essential habitat", but this protection ended with the delisting. However, eagles are still protected by numerous state and federal policy, including The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, The Migratory Bird Treaty Act and The Lacey Act. The State will still consider bald eagle species of special concern.

#### **4.3 Other Habitats**

Isle au Haut's coast and many of the outer surrounding islands are habitat for several species that are endangered, threatened or of special concern. These include the birds arctic tern, bald eagle, great cormorant, harlequin duck, and purple sandpiper. Maine's Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA) protects shore bird, wading bird or waterfowl habitat, as well as seabird nesting areas. Some coastal areas, islands and ledges within Isle au Haut's board fall in this category. There are two wetlands that are rated as moderate value for inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat under the NRPA. Several wetlands are habitat for the spot-winged glider, a dragonfly.

In addition to notable animal habitats, there are several rare or notable plant communities. The only population of Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) in Maine is located on Isle au Haut. Appalachian fir-clubmoss (*Huperzia appalachiana*), screwstem (*Baronian paniculata*), mountain sandwort (*Minuartia groenlandica*) and blinks (*Montia fontana*) are all present on Isle au Haut. Notable habitats including sedge heath fens, lower elevation spruce-fir forests, leather leaf bogs, pitch pine woodlands and low elevation bald areas, are home to unusual plant assemblages.

#### **4.4 Scenic Areas**

There are innumerable scenic areas on Isle au Haut and the surrounding islands. Camden hills and the mountains of Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island are visible from the mountains and coastal cliffs of Isle au Haut. The pond, bogs and pitch pine forests also provide interesting scenery.

#### **4.5 Unbroken habitat blocks**

Because of the acreage owned by Acadia National Park, Isle au Haut is home to large tracts of unbroken habitat. Such blocks are important to ensure habitat conductivity. Isle au Haut's current zoning encourages large habitat blocks, with large minimum lot sizes in remote areas. Additional conservation efforts are discussed in the recreation and open space section.

## **5. *Overview of Existing Regulations Governing Natural Resources***

### **5.1 Local Regulations**

The Town of Isle au Haut implemented zoning ordinances in March 1975. These ordinances are addressed in more detail in the land use section. The island is divided into five zones: remote shoreland, accessible interior, accessible shoreland, remote interior and resource protection. Resource protection zones “include areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biotic systems or scenic and natural values.” There are additional land use restrictions in this zone.

Maine shoreland zoning requires that towns work to protect shoreland areas by adopting shoreland zoning ordinances. Land use restrictions apply within 250 feet of the normal high-water line of any Great Pond, river or saltwater body, within 250 feet of the upland edge of a coastal or freshwater wetland, or within 75 feet of the high water line of a stream.

There is no legal deer hunting season on Isle au Haut.

### **5.2 State Regulations**

Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) and Maine Department of Conservation (MDOC) and MIFW oversee the state protection of key plant and animal habitats.

The Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) inventories lands that support rare and endangered plants ecosystems and provides information and suggestions for the management of such areas. MNAP recommends that bald eagle habitat should be protected within one-quarter mile of the nests.

The Natural Resources Protection Act (NRPA) protects waterfowl habitats and other wetland areas. This law requires permits for construction, dredging and similar activities in waterfowl habitat. Regional biologists from MDIFW are available to assist towns in the event of development applications in designated sites. NRPA protected natural resources include coastal sand dune systems, coastal wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, fragile mountain areas, freshwater wetlands, Great ponds, rivers, streams or brooks. Permits are required if an activity is proposed to be located in, on, or over any protected natural resource, or adjacent to a coastal wetland, Great Pond, river, stream, brook, a significant wildlife habitat within a fresh water wetland.

### **5.3 Federal Regulations**

Federal and state legislation protect endangered species through the Endangered Species Act. The bald eagle has been removed from the endangered species list. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Lacey Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle act prevent the taking or disturbance of Bald Eagles. The former two acts also protect other plants and animals on Isle au Haut. The US Fish and Wildlife Service also oversees the protection of key habitat within the Gulf of Maine. Acadia National Park forbids the taking of plants and animals from within the park.

## **6. *Summary of Current Trends***

Residents of Isle au Haut value the natural environment. The Islands are home to a number of significant bird and insect habitats, rare plant communities and countless

scenic areas. Existing conservation efforts and the lands within Acadia National Park have maintained large blocks of habitat. Residents, overall, support additional preservation of natural and scenic areas, but more seasonal residents support these efforts than year round residents. There is a large deer population on Isle au Haut, which has caused concern about Lyme disease. Seasonal residents support efforts to control the deer population, but year round residents do not. In recent years, an increase in the coyote population has been noted. It is critical, residents have noted, for any future development to be in such a way as not to detract from the island's natural beauty.

## **7. *Adequacy of Existing Protection Measures***

Isle au Haut has zoning ordinances to protect valuable natural resources; however, the past lack of a code enforcement officer has limited the enforcement of town ordinances. The amount of land within Acadia National Park creates a large area of uninterrupted habitat.

## **8. *Threats to Natural Resources***

Future development could pose a threat to critical habitats and natural resources. The town's past lack of a code enforcement officer leads to uneven ordinance enforcement. As a result, only those who value the ordinances abide by them.

## **9. *Issues of Public Concern***

The natural resources of Isle au Haut are closely related to the quality of place enjoyed by island residents. The public opinion survey and conversations with community members indicate that there is concern about maintaining both the natural character of Isle au Haut and a viable, sustainable year round community. The community supports conserving wild places, though there is more support among seasonal residents than year round residents. There is also concern, especially among the seasonal residents, about the deer population, Lyme disease, and the growing coyote population.

## **10. *Polices and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It shall be the policy of the Town of Isle au Haut to protect critical habitats of rare plants and animals.

### **Strategy**

1. Town of Isle au Haut shall not publicize the locations of rare plant and animal communities. Timeframe: ongoing.
2. The town of Isle au Haut shall cooperate with State and Federal agencies, National Park Service and other organizations to monitor critical natural resources. Timeframe: ongoing.
3. The planning board shall ensure that shoreland zoning ordinances meet the state minimum standards, enforce resource protection and shoreland zoning ordinances and ensure that any new development will not harm Isle au Haut's critical natural resources. Timeframe: ongoing.

4. The planning board shall investigate modifying zoning ordinances to require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify any critical natural resources that may be affected and take necessary measures to protect those resources. Timeframe: review 2012.
5. The town of Isle au Haut shall adopt natural resource protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties and require their implementation by the community's officials, employees, and contractors. Timeframe: 2012.
6. The town shall continue efforts to protect the natural environment of the town including encouraging recycling, energy efficiency, best management practices and green building. Timeframe: ongoing.

Draft



## **K. Marine Resources**

### **1. Purpose**

Marine resources are vital to Maine coastal communities, including Isle au Haut. This section describes Isle au Haut's marine resource areas and water dependent uses, including access, uses, and importance to the economy of the town and region. We assess the adequacy of harbor facilities and public access points to determine whether improvements to facilities will be needed to accommodate future demands, and whether marine resources are viable for future commercial fishing. This report also investigates future threats to marine resources caused by future development and evaluates the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve marine resources. Policies and Strategies are addressed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Marine resources are integral to Isle au Haut's identity. The water quality surrounding the island is generally excellent, and numerous species can be found there. The waters are also paddling and sailing destinations.

Public access to the ocean is limited to the town landing. Currently lobster is the most important commercially fished species. As a result, the health of the lobster stocks is important to the community. An increase in fuel and bait prices combined with a decrease in lobster prices has plagued the lobster industry recently. Isle au Haut fishermen are threatened by competition from mainland fishermen.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

Sixty-one percent of survey respondents rate marine resource utilization as "extremely important". At the time of the public opinion survey, in 2007, 36 percent of respondents rated the town dock as needing improvement. A new dock was completed in the fall of 2009. Seventy-two percent rated water front access as "good" or "excellent". Aquaculture is viewed as a highly favorable addition to Isle au Haut's economy by 68 percent of the year round respondents and 46 percent of the seasonal respondents. About two-thirds of respondents feel that more should be done to protect fishing related jobs. Written comments show concern about the dependence on one species and increased pressure from mainland fishermen. Several comments show support for an Isle au Haut conservation zone.

### **4. Overview of Existing Marine Resources**

The town of Isle au Haut, consisting of 23 islands, is rich in marine resources. These range from seabird nesting grounds to habitat for commercial species such as lobster, herring, ground fish, clams, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, starfish, mussels, scallops and elvers, and also provide recreational fishing, clamming and sea duck hunting. With its many anchorages and scenic shoreline and its proximity to the Maine Island Trail, it is a cruising destination for sailboats, yachts, schooners, powerboats and kayaks.

There is one public landing with a new dock constructed in the fall of 2009. Most boats are moored near the public landing in the thoroughfare (more than 40 moorings). The public landing is a key public resource because it allows all transport of people and materials from the mainland. The public landing is discussed further in the public services and facilities section. There are numerous private docks and moorings out side of the thoroughfare. In addition to the public landing, the mail boat also stops at the dock at the summer community at Point Lookout and Acadia National Park's Duck Harbor dock.

The regular mail boat services can accommodate passengers and smaller freight. Large items, such as vehicles, must be barged on to the island.

## 5. *Marine Water Quality*

The water quality surrounding Isle au Haut is good. The waters surrounding the northern portion of the island are rated as SB, or general-purpose waters. The water is suitable habitat for all indigenous fish, estuarine, and marine life. Suitable uses include recreation, fishing, aquaculture, the propagation and harvesting of shellfish, navigation, industrial process and cool water supply, and hydroelectric power generation. Discharges may not cause the closure of shellfish beds, and there are limits on the levels of bacteria permitted. The waters surrounding the southern part of the island, and Acadia National Park, are rated as SA. It is suitable habitat for natural fish, estuarine and marine life. Suitable uses include recreation, fishing, aquaculture (excluding fin fish), the propagation and harvesting of shellfish, and navigation. Bacteria and dissolved oxygen levels must be maintained at the natural levels. Direct discharge is prohibited. Map 14 shows this classification.

It should be noted that shellfish beds are periodically closed due to paralytic shellfish poisoning (red tide). These closures can occur through out the year. Red Tide indicates that shellfish contain high levels of toxins produced by a type of algae bloom.

There is no direct discharge in Isle au Haut waters.

## 6. *Worms, Shellfish and Commercial Fishing*

The lobster fishery in waters surrounding Isle au Haut brings in tens of millions of dollars worth of product per year, supports hundreds of people, and is the major economy of the neighboring towns. Isle au Haut sits in the middle of this rich fishing ground.

Table G.1 shows the number of dealer and harvester licenses held by Isle au Haut residents from 2002 through 2007 as well as the number of trap tags issued.

**Table G.1 Isle au Haut Licenses and Traps Tags**

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Dealers</b>	1	2	2	2	3	1
<b>Harvesters</b>	23	22	20	21	24	24
<b>Total Trap Tags</b>	2985	3545	3105	3105	3290	3365

Traditional water dependent uses are declining. Regulations and a decline in herring, scallops and urchins affected those fisheries. Though the number of lobster harvesters on Isle au Haut has remained fairly stable during the past five years, this may not continue indefinitely. Threats to the Isle au Haut lobster fleet include: the loss of the lobster pound, lack of available and affordable housing, lack of places to haul boats, gear

and floats. Unless Isle au Haut has its own conservation zone or the state exempts outer islands to limited entry laws, a decline due to retiring fisherman will lead to fewer workboats. Note that is below data reports the address of the licensee, not necessary the fishing location.

<b>Isle au Haut Marine Licenses</b>		
Source Maine DMR	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>COMM FISHING/CREW</b>	2	5
<b>COMM SHRIMP-SINGLE</b>	0	1
<b>LOB/CRAB NON-COMM</b>	2	1
<b>LOBSTER CRAB CLASS II +70</b>		1
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB APPRENT</b>	3	2
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB CLASS I</b>	3	3
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB CLASS II</b>	8	7
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB CLASS III</b>	5	4
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB OVER AGE 70</b>		1
<b>LOBSTER/CRAB STUDENT</b>	0	3
<b>SCALLOP - DRAGGER</b>	3	1

**Table G.2 Marine Licenses**

Because of the small number of dealers and fishermen on Isle au Haut, confidentiality requirements limit the reporting of landings data. No other species is currently economically significant.

Currently, two residents have an oyster aquaculture permit.

Besides lobster, clams are also a significant resource. There is some concern about the number of off island clam diggers harvesting in Isle au Haut's flats.

## **7. *Related Marine Employment***

Isle au Haut is not currently home to any large-scale shipbuilding or maintenance work. Individuals have occasionally built and repaired boats.

## **8. *Other Marine Resources***

The waters surrounding Isle au Haut provide important habitat for birds, mammals, fish and other marine life. This is further discussed in the critical natural resources section.

## **9. *Water Dependent Uses***

The State of Maine defines water dependent uses as "those that require direct access to or location in coastal waters and which therefore cannot be located away from these waters." This includes, but is not limited to, commercial and recreational fishing and boating facilities, finfish and shellfish processing, storage, marketing (both retail and wholesale), waterfront dock and port facilities, shipyards, boat building facilities, marinas, navigation aids, basins and channels, and certain industrial uses. Water dependent use areas on Isle au Haut include the public town landing and the lobstermen's association building and dock on Moxie Island.

## 10. *Marine Access Points*

Twenty wharves are currently in existence - one public, two privately owned and one leased by fishermen, one private fuel delivery wharf, and 15 private seasonal wharves. A new public dock was completed during the fall of 2009. The dock is 160 feet long and 20-24 feet wide, with a 70-foot ramp. The dock is estimated to be useable for 50 years. The only protected access is the public dock and ramp (which amounts to about 100 feet of shoreline). Shore access plans are lacking for Old Cove and Moore's Harbor. Moxie Island is owned by the Isle au Haut Lobstermen's Association and might qualify for working water front current use taxation program.

There are no significant beaches, but there are a number of scenic access points. Acadia National Park and Boom Beach are publicly owned and protected- while Seal trap, Point Lookout, Riches Cove, Old Cove, the Inn, Horseman's Point and Head Harbor are private with no protection. There is a concern that access to these sites could be severely limited in the future.

Table G.3 shows the total registered boat anchorage by boat length in 2004. This includes the boats documented through the U.S. Coast Guard and does not include boats moored in Isle au Haut, but registered elsewhere, or human or wind powered vessels.

Boat Length	Number
13	2
15	1
16	1
18	2
19	2
20	3
25	1
26	1
28	1
32	2
33	1
34	3
35	4
36	1
37	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

Table G.3 2004 Boat Anchorage

## 11. *Adequacy of Existing Ordinances and Protection Measures*

Existing state and local measures designed to protect water quality are adequate. The town's past lack of a code enforcement officer has hindered the enforcement of shoreland zoning ordinances.

## 12. *Issues of Public Concern*

The public opinion survey indicates concern of the dependence on one marine resource. This leaves fishermen vulnerable to lobster price fluctuations or an increase in the price of fuel and bait. Isle au Haut fishermen are also threatened by mainland

fishermen occasionally intruding into their territory. Given this dependence on lobstering, the health of the lobster stocks is critical.

There is some concern about limited public marine access. Isle au Haut currently has only one public landing: the town dock. This is the only public place to haul up or launch boats. Isle au Haut also currently does not have an acting harbormaster.

Lastly, there is some concern about off island diggers harvesting clams on Isle au Haut.

### **13. *Polices and Strategies***

#### **Policy**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to support and encourage all appropriate marine based enterprises, including fishing and aquaculture.
2. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain and improve the water quality of the surrounding waters.
3. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to provide safe and efficient public access to marine waters and actively preserve current working waterfront properties.

#### **Strategy**

1. The town, through the planning board, selectmen and interested parties, shall develop a shoreline access plan to maintain public access to the shoreline. Timeframe: 2011-2012.
2. The town, through selectmen and interested parties, shall work with other organizations to ensure that the interests of Isle au Haut fishermen are represented. Timeframe: ongoing.
3. The town, through selectmen or designate shall investigate the development and implementation of a shellfish/worm ordinance Timeframe: 2012.
4. The planning board and code enforcement officer shall enforce all shoreland zoning ordinances and other ordinances designed to protect marine water quality. Timeframe: ongoing.

## **L. Land Use**

### **1. Purpose**

This section identifies the uses of land throughout Isle au Haut. It also notes changes and recent trends in land use and determines the effect on future land uses. After considering public input, this section establishes goals for future land use and identifies land areas suitable for future growth and development. Policies and strategies are also discussed.

### **2. Key Findings and Issues**

Most residents of Isle au Haut feel that future land use must be consistent with the wild character of the island. There is little commercial land use on Isle au Haut and about half of the island is within Acadia National Park's boundaries. Isle au Haut has municipal zoning ordinances that regulate land uses within the Town. A Planning Board oversees new development and construction, but has been hindered by a past lack of a code enforcement officer.

### **3. Public Opinion Survey Results**

Respondents to the public opinion survey noted that they value the natural beauty of the island and a strong sense of community. Respondents also valued the freedom from mainland pressures and relative lack of regulations.

Ninety-two percent of respondents rated the minimal commercial development as either "extremely important" or "somewhat important". The community supports the development of home-based businesses. About half of those who responded favor the development of small businesses or aquaculture, though more year round residents (68 percent) favor aquaculture than seasonal residents (46 percent). Eighty-six percent favored the building of more year round houses and the majority of respondents favor marine dependant land uses. Community members did not favor additional seasonal housing, tourism or restaurants. Development should be small, fit the character of the island, and fill an island need, for example affordable housing, auto repair, etc.

The majority of respondents supported conservation efforts, though the support is stronger among seasonal residents than year round residents. Most respondents favored development clustered in the traditional areas of Moore's Harbor, the Thoroughfare, Point Lookout, Rich's Cove and Head Harbor. Again, this response differs between seasonal and year round residents: 58 percent year round resident respondents favor clustered development compared to 78 percent of seasonal resident respondents.

The public opinion survey also asked about the form of future housing development. Respondents favored the development of year round homes over additional seasonal homes. Most respondents favored the creation of regulations governing the size and height or design of new structures (57 percent year round and 66 percent seasonal) and reviewing current zoning ordinances (77 percent year round and 61 percent seasonal). Narrative comments suggest that the minimum lot size of one-quarter acre in Zone C (Accessible shoreland) should be increased.

More seasonal resident respondents (64 percent) favored the creation of workforce housing than year round resident respondents (45 percent). Community members felt that condominiums, apartment houses, townhouses, and other multi-unit dwellings do not have a place on Isle au Haut. Condominiums proved to be especially unpopular with year round residents: 95 percent rate them as undesirable. Narrative comments suggest that respondents favor houses consistent with the existing character of the island. If townhouses and other attached units were to be permitted they should be restricted to the growth areas or town-owned property. Ordinances would be necessary to ensure that such development would be consistent with the character of the island.

#### **4. *Overview of Existing Conditions and Data***

The town of Isle au Haut consists of the main island of Isle au Haut and more than twenty other small islands, which have no year round residents. The total area of the town is 109.6 square miles, including water. As a group of islands Isle au Haut does not border any other towns on land. It shares water boundaries with Stonington, Vinalhaven, North Haven and Swan's Island.

As the name suggests, Isle au Haut is an island of some elevation. The highest point, Mount Champlain, is 540 feet above sea level, and part of a central ridge oriented North-South. This is the highest point of any of the islands in Penobscot Bay. The coastline is mostly rocky, with high cliffs and scenic views. The freshwater pond stretches a mile on the eastern side. Most of the soil on the island is shallow, which hinders development.

#### **5. *Local Regulations***

Isle au Haut adopted zoning ordinances in 1975, which have been amended several times over the past thirty-five years. The town is divided into five zones. These are defined below. Map 15 shows Isle au Haut's zoning. Note that through out the ordinances "any road" means any road existing in 1975 and that the minimum lot size applies to each dwelling unit.

**Zone A- Remote Shoreland:** Land which is less than 500 feet from mean high water, but more than 1,000 feet from the centerline, fork or termination of any road. This zone is included in the rural areas. Parts of 41 parcels and 277 acres make up the Remote Shoreland. Minimum lot size: 10 acres

**Zone B-Accessible Interior:** Land which is less than 1,000 feet from the centerline, fork, or termination of any road, but more than 500 feet from mean high water. This zone also includes land between 125 feet and 500 feet from the normal high water mark of Long Pond. If land more than 125 feet and less than 500 feet any other definition included in zones A, C, or D, it is included in Zone B. Lands in this zone are considered growth areas or transitional areas. Parts of 204 parcels and 1388 acres make up the accessible Interior. Minimum lot size: two acres.

**Zone C-Accessible Shoreland:** Land which is less than 500 feet from mean high water and less than 1,000 feet from the centerline, fork or termination of any road. There is little land available for development in this zone. Parts of 196 parcels and 406 acres make up the Accessible Shoreland. Minimum lot size ¼ acre. Note that the minimum lot size is superseded by shoreland zoning.

**Zone D-Remote Interior:** Land which is more than 500 feet from mean high water and more than 1,000 feet from the centerline, fork or termination of any road. This area is considered rural. Parts of 48 parcels and 1411 acres make up the Remote Interior.

Minimum lot size: 20 acres.

**Zone E-Resource Protection:** Resource Protection Districts include areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biotic systems, or scenic and natural values. This includes Long Pond outlet, Long pond greenbelt (land around Long Pond a distance of 125 feet horizontal feet from normal high water), the Great Meadow, Great Spoon Island, York Island, Rich's Point, Pond Point on Burnt Island, Moore's Harbor Swale, Fog Island, and all land owned in fee by Acadia National Park. Parts of 39 parcels and 3226 acres make up the Resource Protection zone.

Residential development is prohibited in Zone E (Resource Protection).

Permitted land uses are described in table L.1. Note that "heavy industry" includes, but is not limited to, oil refining, nuclear generating plants, metallurgical processing, stone quarrying, mills or factories employing more than 50 people at one location, restaurants, motels, hotels, entertainment or other service facilities providing on premise services to more than 50 people at one time, and commercial boats unloading more than 50 people at a time. The zoning standards outline land use standards for permitted land uses in different zones.



Table L.1 Isle au Haut's Land Use Guidelines

	Resource Protection	Remote Shoreland	Accessible Interior	Accessible Shoreland	Remote Interior
<b>Non Intensive Recreational</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Resource Management Practices</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Timber Harvesting</b>	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Surveying, resource analysis and mineral exploration</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Emergency operations</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Agriculture</b>	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Marine related activities, excluding structures</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Marine related activities, including structures</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	no
<b>Residential Dwelling Units</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit
<b>Commercial structures, Industrial structures and cottage industries</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit
<b>Heavy Industries</b>	no	no	no	no	no
<b>Structures accessory to permitted uses, additions of 100 sq ft or less and alterations to existing structures</b>	no	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit
<b>Road Construction</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit
<b>Commercial Camp ground</b>	no	no	no	no	no
<b>Temporary projections into the water</b>	no	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit
<b>Permanent projections into the water</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit

<b>Clearing for approved construction</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Public utilities</b>	no	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit	Planning Board Permit
<b>Private sewage disposal systems</b>	no	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit
<b>Filling and earth moving of 10 cubic yards or less</b>	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Filling and earth moving of more than 10 cubic yards</b>	no	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit	CEO Permit
<b>Other Uses</b>	Permit requirements to be determined by the code enforcement officer, but subject to review by the planning board.				

Table L.6 Continued

Residential development is prohibited in Zone E (Resource Protection). The zoning ordinances outline the minimum lot sizes for other zones: Zone A (Remote Shoreland)- 10 acre minimum, Zone B (Accessible Interior)-two acre minimum, Zone C (Accessible Shoreland)-1/4 acre minimum, and Zone D (Remote Interior)-20 acre minimum. If a parcel is located within more than one zone, the minimum lot size is calculated by a weighted average of concerned minimum lot sizes. The minimum lot size applies to each dwelling unit.

The zoning documents also describe the permitting procedure. Written permit from the Planning Board is required for the locating or building of any structure or subdivision of land. Building permit applications must show clearly in writing the location of any proposed structures, intended construction, arrangements to be made for plumbing and sewage, safety precautions for dangerous or combustible substances and access from public rights of way. Approval will not be granted to projects that threaten water quality, produce significant air pollution, create a public nuisance or fire hazard, lack sufficient access from public right of way or shore, or would severely threaten the present character of the island and grossly offend the majority of the residents and non resident taxpayers.

Maine's Shoreland Zoning Act require towns to regulate land use activities within 250 feet of Great Ponds, rivers, freshwater and coastal wetlands, including tidal waters. The act also governs areas within 75 feet of some streams. This act provides minimal restrictions. Map 16 shows areas covered under shoreland zoning.

## **6. *Summary of Current Land Use Trends***

Isle au Haut is a rural, remote community. It is located seven miles from the mainland and there is no car ferry. There is almost no commercial land use, heavy industry or large scale tourism, and more than half of the island is part of Acadia National Park. The population is small, falling below 50 in the winter. Like other surrounding towns, lobster fishing is important, and there are a large number of seasonal homes.

### **6.1 Residential Land Use Trends**

Residential development in the past has been focused in several neighborhoods on the main island: The Thoroughfare, Point Lookout, Rich's Cove, Head Harbor and Moore's Harbor. Map 2 shows the historic settlements. Point Lookout, Moore's Harbor, and Riches Cove are now predominantly seasonal settlements. Additional residential development also exists along the roadway on the East side of the island. The outer islands do not currently have any year round residents, though there have been year round settlements on some of the outer islands in the past.

Anecdotal evidence suggests those former year round homes are becoming seasonal homes. These trends are discussed more in the Population and Housing sections. Recent development has mostly occurred lot by lot. Because of the small population, housing projection is difficult. This plan projects that there will be about 164 housing units in 2030 compared to 143 in 2010. More information about these projections can be found in the Housing section.

## 6.2 Commercial Land Use Trends

Apart from individual workshops, the Island Store, a chocolate business, an inn, and a sawmill, Isle au Haut has little commercial land use.

## 6.3 Subdivision Activity

Within the past five years there has been one subdivision in 2009. It is comprised of three parcels on the eastern shore of Long Pond.

## 7. *Issues of Public Concern*

Respondents to the public opinion survey express a concern that future development will not be consistent with the current character of the island. There are several comments expressing concern about the development of restaurants, hotels, “McMansions”, and what will become of the number of properties currently on the market. A majority of respondents favor a re-examination of current zoning ordinances and perhaps adding ordinances governing the height and size of residential construction. The past lack of a code enforcement officer has hindered the enforcement of current zoning ordinances.

## 8. *Future Land use plan*

Isle au Haut’s zoning is designed to protect the unique character of Isle au Haut, while permitting both year round and seasonal development. Isle au Haut’s current zoning provides a starting point for the future land use plan. The zoning includes five zones: *accessible interior*, *accessible shoreland*, *remote interior*, *remote shoreland*, and *resource protection*.

Any development on Isle au Haut is constrained by steep slopes and shallow soils throughout the Island. Please refer to the slope and soil maps in the appendix. These factors constrain road development and septic placement. The geography of Isle au Haut further limits development. Acadia National Park occupies much of the central, western and southern parts of the island. An agreement with Acadia National Park limits construction above elevations of 300 feet. Isle au Haut is also home to a number of wetlands, which are protected by state regulation.

The accessible interior zone, near Coombs Mountain and areas around traditional settlement areas (Moore’s Harbor, Head Harbor, Rich’s Cove, Point Lookout and the Thoroughfare) shall be considered growth areas. Approximate growth areas are shown in Map 17. Growth areas will be in the area of the Thoroughfare as well as the lands on Coombs Mountain. These areas are accessible by road and would require minimal capital improvements for additional development. The results of the public opinion survey suggest that a majority of community members favor additional development within the traditional settlement areas. Because affordable housing is a pressing community need, the town should investigate creating an overlay zone for affordable year round housing on appropriate town or ICDC owned lands. This area would also be a designated growth area, and permit higher density development. It is recommended that the minimum lot size in the overlay zone be one acre. Note that the town and ICDC own these lands for the purpose of providing affordable year round housing and these lands are near or adjacent to “town” near the Thoroughfare. Soil characteristics are generally as good as

those in other nearby developed areas and do not include any areas above 300 feet. Map 18 shows the overlay zone. Although the accessible interior permits high density development, there is little remaining land available for building in the accessible shoreland zone.

Two existing zones should be designated as *rural areas: remote interior, remote shoreland*. These areas are not easily accessible by road and have larger minimum lot size. The existing *resource protection zone* should remain in effect. The zone includes lands within Acadia National Park, the Great Meadow and several other key natural areas. This designation helps protect the natural and wild quality of the island. Rural Areas are shown in Map 19 and Resource Protection Areas are shown in Map 20

There are no anticipated major municipal capital investments necessary to support proposed land use. However, improved fire and medical services will benefit all residents and may help attract new residents. Some additional road development may be necessary to access some of the town owned lands designated for affordable year round development.

There is concern expressed in the public opinion survey about development adjacent to the pond, and whether zoning near the pond should be reexamined. Pond water quality could be impacted by pond side development, especially the steep slopes near the pond.

The land use plan aims to protect the natural beauty of the island while encouraging affordable housing for a year round community. Isle au Haut's ordinances preventing heavy industry and large-scale commercial development should remain in effect. Height restrictions can also help maintain the existing character of Isle au Haut.

## **9. Policies and Strategies**

### **Policies**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to direct the planning board to reexamine current zoning ordinances and recommend changes appropriate to the current situation and responsive to the concerns of island residents and landowners.
2. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain and adopt land use strategies that will maintain the unique character of the Island while encouraging a sustainable year round community.
3. It shall be the policy of the Town of Isle au Haut to coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts by working with surrounding communities.
4. It shall be the policy of the Town of Isle au Haut to encourage affordable housing while protecting the natural character of the island.
5. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
6. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to maintain efficient, consistent and transparent permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
7. It shall be the Policy of the Town of Isle au Haut to protect critical resource areas from the impacts of development.

## Strategies

1. The Planning Board shall consider implementing a height restriction ordinance.  
Timeframe: Review-2011 for vote at 2012 town meeting.
2. Small scale home based business and occupations shall continue to be permitted, in accordance with current zoning. Timeframe: Ongoing.
3. Heavy industry shall continue to be restricted on Isle au Haut, in accordance with current zoning. Timeframe: Ongoing.
4. Marine based land uses shall be supported, in accordance with current zoning.  
Timeframe: Ongoing.
5. The Town of Isle au Haut shall designate the accessible interior, areas near traditional settlements, Coombs Mountain and the overlay affordable housing zone as growth areas.
6. At least 75 percent of new growth-related capital investment shall be made in the designated growth area.
7. The Planning Board shall investigate and draft an ordinance permitting accessory apartments or duplexes in appropriate areas. Timeframe: Review-2011 for vote at 2012 town meeting.
8. The Planning Board shall update the minimum lot size in the accessible shoreland to be consistent with State shoreland zoning minimums. It is recommended it should increase from one-quarter of an acre to one acre. Timeframe: Review-2011 for vote at 2012 town meeting.
9. The Planning Board and Town of Isle au Haut create an affordable housing overlay zone including appropriate town and ICDC owned lands with a minimum lot size of one acre to promote affordable housing. Timeframe: Planning board review-2011 for vote at 2012 town meeting.
10. The Planning Board shall maintain fair and efficient permitting procedures and appropriate fees, and streamline permitting procedures in growth areas.  
Timeframe: ongoing.
11. The chair of the Planning Board and First Selectmen shall periodically meet with neighboring communities and consult with The Hancock Planning Commission and the Maine State Planning Office to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies. Timeframe: ongoing.
12. Isle au Haut's Planning Board shall provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4451. Timeframe: ongoing.
13. Isle au Haut's Planning Board shall track new development in the community by type and location. Timeframe: ongoing.
14. Isle au Haut's Planning Board shall evaluate this plan every five years.

## M. Fiscal Capacity

### 1. Purpose

This section discusses Isle au Haut's current fiscal conditions, assesses revenue and expenditure trends, and discusses future trends. This information will help determine the town's current ability to fund existing services and facilities, as well as its ability to accommodate future development.

### 2. Key Findings and Issues

Increasing tax bills are a concern for the property owners of Isle au Haut. Property taxes have increased recently, but Isle au Haut's valuation and tax rate are among the lowest in Knox County. Property taxes provide most of the town's revenue. Education is the largest expenditure category, followed by transportation. The state provides minimal assistance in education funding. The town has recently replaced the public landing and has borrowed money to purchase two properties.

### 3. Public Opinion Survey Results

No questions from the 2007 public opinion survey directly address Isle au Haut's fiscal capacity, though several narrative comments allude to increasing property taxes.

### 4. Assessed Valuation, Commitment and Tax Rate

**Table M.1 Isle au Haut Property Tax Information. Source: Town Reports**

Year	Local Valuation	% change (local)	Tax Rate	Property Tax Commitment	% Change in Commitment
2002	\$26,584,629.00		0.010240	\$ 271,850.34	
2003	\$31,719,555.00	19.3%	0.008550	\$ 270,125.00	-0.6%
2004	\$32,308,888.00	1.9%	0.009350	\$ 300,854.00	11.4%
2005	\$32,470,851.00	0.5%	0.009860	\$ 320,433.00	6.5%
2006	\$32,680,236.00	0.6%	0.012030	\$ 393,474.00	22.8%
2007	\$33,115,549.00	1.3%	0.013200	\$ 435,941.00	10.8%
2008	\$75,370,395.00	127.6%	0.006510	\$ 489,561.00	12.3%
2009	\$74,993,571.00	-0.5%	0.006550	\$ 490,101.00	0.1%

Table M.1 shows changes in assessed valuation, property tax commitment and rate, as well as how this has changed over the past eight years. After revaluation in 2008, the tax rate was adjusted. This tax rate is less than that of many other towns in Knox County. Isle au Haut's property tax commitment has increased by 80 percent between 2002 and 2009, while the state valuation has increased by 221 percent. There has been only moderate development during this period so the increase valuation is mostly due to the local real estate market. Property taxes make up 80-90 percent of the town's income.

Compared to other towns in Knox County, Isle au Haut has a lower total valuation. The tax rate decreased between 2007 and 2009. In 2007 Isle au Haut's tax rate was the fourth highest Knox County. By 2009, the tax rate had fallen to the lowest in the

county. Table M.2 shows the total valuation and tax rates for Isle au Haut and other Knox County towns in 2007 and 2009, sorted by tax rate.

The existing state current use taxation programs are not widely used on Isle au Haut. 1,232.78 acres are in tree growth, 196.81 are in open space, but no land is classified as agriculture. The land around the town landing is included in the working waterfront program. The town has no local current use taxation programs.

**Table M.2 Knox County Valuation and Tax Rates**

2007			2009		
TOWN	TOTAL VALUATION	TAX RATE	TOWN	TOTAL VALUATION	TAX RATE
ROCKLAND	\$756,294,300	0.01770	ROCKLAND	\$757,031,500.00	0.01720
THOMASTON	\$345,760,139	0.01580	APPLETON	\$ 115,303,717.00	0.01560
APPLETON	\$112,804,136	0.01565	THOMASTON	\$ 370,820,241.00	0.01548
<b>ISLE AU HAUT</b>	<b>\$33,092,989</b>	<b>0.01440</b>	WASHINGTON	\$ 115,609,815.00	0.01375
WASHINGTON	\$107,497,710	0.01325	CUSHING	\$ 236,443,170.00	0.01340
CAMDEN	\$1,081,948,660	0.01273	CAMDEN	\$ 1,099,962,681.00	0.01321
CUSHING	\$231,633,160	0.01220	WARREN	\$ 294,341,200.00	0.01320
SAINT GEORGE	\$518,470,500	0.01210	HOPE	\$ 185,830,100.00	0.01265
WARREN	\$290,313,100	0.01190	SAINT GEORGE	\$ 535,233,610.00	0.01250
HOPE	\$181,544,200	0.01180	UNION	\$ 228,512,700.00	0.01230
ROCKPORT	\$936,676,000	0.01124	ROCKPORT	\$ 980,380,500.00	0.01138
UNION	\$226,391,500	0.01090	SOUTH THOMASTON	\$ 256,223,463.00	0.01074
OWLS HEAD	\$297,437,520	0.00975	OWLS HEAD	\$ 313,344,900.00	0.01035
SOUTH THOMASTON	\$246,586,402	0.00950	FRIENDSHIP	\$ 230,941,200.00	0.00950
FRIENDSHIP	\$231,428,400	0.00870	VINALHAVEN	\$ 491,132,693.00	0.00840
VINALHAVEN	\$447,292,061	0.00840	MATINICUS ISLE PLT	\$ 29,844,364.00	0.00810
MATINICUS ISLE PLT	\$30,239,310	0.00710	NORTH HAVEN	\$ 412,988,800.00	0.00762
NORTH HAVEN	\$413,239,585	0.00659	<b>ISLE AU HAUT</b>	<b>\$ 74,824,571.00</b>	<b>0.00655</b>

## 5. *Trends in Revenue Sources and Town Assets*

The largest portion of Isle au Haut's net assets is in the form of capital assets, such as land, buildings, equipment and infrastructure. The town owns several pieces of property and buildings. Three buildings are rental properties. Property taxes make up the majority of the town's revenue. As of 2009, property taxes make up about 90 percent of the town's revenue. Table M.3 and M.4 show the town's revenue sources and the percent of the each source for 2009.

Currently, tax revenues from new development offset the cost of additional services and capital investments. It should be noted that the town has not extended many services for previous residential development. There are presently no impact fees.

Isle au Haut town officials do not anticipate any changes in the community's tax base in the future. Future conservation agreements could reduce the tax base.

Several community comments have suggested that the town should make a stronger effort to collect back taxes and unpaid automobile excise taxes.

There are several landowners within the town of Isle au Haut who are exempt or pay reduced taxes. Acadia National Park is the major tax-exempt land owner on the



island. Acadia National Park owns about half of Isle au Haut. The National Government provides a small “payment in lieu of taxes” to the town annually. The Isle au Haut Community Development Corporation (ICDC) also issues a “payment in lieu of taxes”. The church and parsonage also have an exemption.

**Table M.2 Revenue Sources**

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Property Taxes</b>	\$320,433.00	\$393,474.00	\$421,951.27	\$470,148.90	\$490,101.00
<b>DOT assistance</b>	\$ 11,198.00	\$ 11,530.00	\$ 5,844.00	\$ 22,938.00	\$ 20,731.75
<b>Buildings</b>	\$ 10,150.00	\$ 9,932.33	\$ 8,745.36	\$ 10,638.00	\$ 10,603.60
<b>Tree Growth Reimbursement</b>	\$ 9,416.00	\$ 13,251.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,072.51
<b>Vehicle Excise Tax</b>	\$ 5,790.81	\$ 7,085.00	\$ 8,051.89	\$ 6,172.91	\$ 7,547.90
<b>Other interest</b>	\$ 4,017.42	\$ 6,501.31	\$ 8,632.78	\$ 8,577.59	
<b>Payment in Lieu of Taxes</b>	\$ 3,829.00	\$ 3,893.70	\$ 5,779.00	\$ 6,755.00	\$ 3,775.00
<b>State Revenue Sharing</b>	\$ 3,050.53	\$ 2,525.37	\$ 3,148.74	\$ 3,075.83	\$ 2,680.26
<b>interest on CDs</b>	\$ 2,757.71	\$ 3,800.13	\$ -	\$ 975.44	\$ 1,073.32
<b>Land</b>	\$ 1,641.00	\$ 7,302.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 1,665.04
<b>Boat Excise Tax</b>	\$ 1,425.50	\$ 1,425.50	\$ 1,734.93	\$ 1,529.10	\$ 1,601.90
<b>Homestead exemption Refund</b>	\$ 1,001.00	\$ 1,243.00	\$ 3,723.74	\$ 2,355.00	\$ 880.00
<b>Veterans Tax Benefits</b>	\$ 10.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 13.00	\$ 20.00
<b>Grant funds</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 39,532.67	\$ -
<b>miscellaneous earnings</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$374,719.97</b>	<b>\$461,973.34</b>	<b>\$472,663.71</b>	<b>\$573,811.44</b>	<b>\$541,752.28</b>
<b>Source: Town Reports</b>					

Table M.3 Percent of 2009 Revenue

	2009	Percent of Revenue
Property Taxes	\$490,101.00	90.47%
DOT assistance	\$20,731.75	3.83%
Buildings	\$10,603.60	1.96%
Tree Growth Reimbursement	\$1,072.51	0.20%
Vehicle Excise Tax	\$7,547.90	1.39%
Other interest		0.00%
Payment in Lieu of Taxes	\$3,775.00	0.70%
State Revenue Sharing	\$2,680.26	0.49%
interest on CDs	\$1,073.32	0.20%
Land	\$1,665.04	0.31%
Boat Excise Tax	\$1,601.90	0.30%
Homestead exemption Refund	\$880.00	0.16%
Veterans Tax Benefits	\$20.00	0.00%
Grant funds	\$ -	0.00%
miscellaneous earnings	\$ -	0.00%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 541,752.28</b>	
<b>Source: Town Reports</b>		

## 6. *Municipal Expenditure Trends*

Education consistently makes up the largest percentage of the municipal budget. This is generally between 30 and 40 percent of the budget. Educational expenditures are predicted to decrease as school enrollment decreases. The state of Maine's educational contribution is shrinking. In the 2009-2010 school year the state share of the school budget amounted to 6.8 percent. The share is projected to fall to 2.08 percent for the 2010-2011 school year. As a result, though the 2010-2011 budget is 10 percent less than the 2009-2010 budget, the town must raise 3.86 percent (\$8,156) more through taxes.

Transportation is the second largest expenditure, making up between 15 and 30 percent of the municipal budget. Strong storms causing road washouts have led to an increase in transportation spending for several years.

Administration is the third largest expenditure category, making up about 15 percent of the budget. Other categories (protection, health/sanitation, unclassified, assessments and debt services) each make up less than 15 percent of total expenditures. Table M.5 shows the expenditure categories for 2002 and 2008. The 2008 expenditures are corrected to 2002 dollars for ease of comparison. Unclassified expenditures, assessments, and debt services showed the greatest percent change between 2002 and 2008. Administration, Protection and Education increase moderately, while health and sanitation and transportation change minimally. It is expected that education and transportation will continue to make up major percentage of town expenditures. Education costs may decrease as enrollment falls, though there are many fixed costs, including building maintenance, teacher salaries, etc.



## **7. *Debt Limits and Borrowing***

Capital investment plans have been funded in the past through tax dollars, grant funding or borrowing. The town does have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain funds for future capital investments. County and school obligations do not hinder the town's borrowing ability. LD 1 had not hindered the town budget because each year, the town votes to override LD1. Note that the levy limit was not reached in 2011.

In 2006 and 2008, the town borrowed money to buy two parcels of land. This amounted to \$25,000.00 borrowed for the 2006 property, and \$35,000.00 for the 2008 property. As of 2009, the town owes \$5,265.51 on the property purchased in 2006, and \$30,000 on the property purchased in 2008. These properties will probably be resold for affordable housing, either to individuals or ICDC.

## **8. *Regional Cooperation***

The town of Isle au Haut cooperates with Stonington and Deer Isle to manage solid waste and share school administrative costs. Isle au Haut and Stonington together purchased the Colwell property in Stonington as access to the water and a barge-landing site. The property is overseen by a committee with representatives from both towns. The towns have pursued some grant monies together.

## **9. *Summary of Current Trends***

Property valuation has increased over the past ten years, which has resulted in higher tax bills. Isle au Haut's tax rate, however, is still lower than most of Knox County. Tax bills contribute to the high cost of living on Isle au Haut. Property taxes provide the majority of the revenue for the town of Isle au Haut. Note that a majority of tax revenue comes from properties owned by seasonal residents, but funds year round services.

Education makes up the largest expenditure category. The State of Maine's contribution is decreasing as a result of statewide budget shortfalls. The shrinking school enrollment will lead to a decrease in educational spending, though it is expected that this category will remain the greatest expenditure, as there are many fixed costs that do not decrease with enrollment.

The replacement of the town dock in 2009 was a major capital project. The town of Isle au Haut has borrowed funds to buy two parcels of land. Please see the Capital Investment Plan for more information.

## **10. *Issues of Public Concern***

The public opinion survey revealed that there is some concern about tax increasing property taxes. Discussion at public meetings suggests that there is some uncollected property and excise tax money.

## **11. *Capital Investment Plan***

Capital expenses are defined as items with a useful life of at least five years that cost at least \$10,000. They are distinct from operational expenditures such as fuel, minor

repairs to buildings and salaries. Capital expenditures on Isle au Haut may be funded in several ways: 1) through an appropriation from a town meeting warrant article; 2) through annual (or periodic) contributions to a reserve fund; 3) borrowing through loans and bonds; 4) through grants, which often require local matching funds; 5) through donations of cash, supplies and labor.

Currently reserve funds are used to anticipate the need to replace trucks, roofs, hoists, etc.

Isle au Haut's existing public services are adequate to accommodate probable projected growth. However, there are a number of projects that could improve life on Isle au Haut.

- The town owns several parcels of land that are available for sale for affordable housing. It could be beneficial for the town to invest some funds to prepare these lots for sale. This includes cleaning up the property and conducting preliminary surveys and septic studies. Priority level: Desirable. Money has been appropriated at past town meetings.
- Town emergency services could be improved. This could include the construction of a new firehouse and/or medical building. Such a medical building could be used as clinic for telemedicine. Priority Level: Deferrable.
- The town landing was replaced in 2009, however the parking area is showing signs of age. Level: Deferrable.
- Community discussions indicate an interest in additional recreation programs, or the development of a recreation fund. This could include improvements to Revere Memorial Hall and library. Level: Deferrable.

## ***12. Policies and Strategies***

### **Policy**

1. It shall be the policy of the town of Isle au Haut to encourage long range fiscal planning to avoid or minimize excessive increases to property taxes while maintaining quality public services.

### **Strategy**

1. The selectmen, treasurer, tax collector, and town clerk shall maintain transparent accurate financial records. Time frame: On going
2. The selectmen shall develop a long-term (10 year) planning strategy. Time frame: 2012.
3. The town of Isle au Haut shall investigate grants, and other funding strategies for capital investments. Timeframe: ongoing.

# **Regional Coordination Program**

## **1     *Introduction***

Although Isle au Haut is an island with a strong tradition of independence, there are still important connections within a greater region. It is vital that Isle au Haut maintains existing ties and investigates new associations.

## **2.     *Water Quality and Fishery***

Isle au Haut does not share any land borders with other towns. It does, however, share water borders with Stonington, Vinalhaven, North Haven and Swan's Island. It is crucial that these communities, and others surrounding Penobscot Bay, work together to protect the Bay's water quality. A decrease in water quality would have detrimental effects on all the communities' economies. Similarly, fishermen must work together to maintain healthy stock levels. The town of Isle au Haut has supported efforts by Penobscot East Research Center and is represented in Lobster Management Zone C.

## **3.     *Transportation***

Stonington is Isle au Haut's major connection to the mainland. The mail boat is docked at a wharf off Sea Breeze Avenue. Because the mail boat serves only passengers, parking is required for both residents and visitors. Isle au Haut residents have an interest in the maintenance of mainland roads and the Deer Isle Bridge.

## **4.     *Education***

Isle au Haut shares a superintendent with the Deer Isle- Stonington school district. Isle au Haut teachers have helped to form the Outer Island Teachers Group. Island teachers and students are able to use technology to share resources and skills with their counterparts on North Haven, Cliff, Islesford, Monhegan, and Matinicus. The Maine Seacoast Mission, through their vessel *The Sunbeam*, also facilitates events that allow outer island students and teachers to get together. This reduces the isolation of the small outer island schools. *The Sunbeam* also offers medical services, craft lessons and safety presentations.

## **5.     *Off Island Waste Disposal***

Isle au Haut takes its garbage to the transfer station in Stonington.

## **6.     *Acadia National Park***

About 50 percent of Isle au Haut is part of Acadia National Park. The town must work with ANP in the shared management of the island.

## **7.     *County Services***

Knox County provides emergency services on Isle au Haut, when necessary. The town's 911 communications go through Knox County's dispatch. Note that because of its proximity, Isle au Haut has strong ties with Hancock County as well as Knox.

## **8. *Regional Support Organizations***

Isle au Haut has participated in the Hancock Planning Commission in the past. Such organizations are helpful in regional transportation, land use and economic development planning.

## **9. *Ties with Other Islands***

Island communities share similar challenges. The Maine Islands Coalition is a group of representatives from unbridged islands with year round communities. The representatives discuss relevant issues and advocate for the economic and environmental sustainability of year round communities. Isle au Haut should continue to send a representative to this group.

The Island Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the sustainability of year round island communities. It hosts conferences, conducts policy research, sponsors scholarships, provides professional support to island leaders, and coordinates the Island Fellows Program, which places recent university graduates in island communities to assist with specific projects. Two island fellows have been placed on Isle au Haut, working at the school, library and assisting with planning. Both have enriched the community in many ways, as well as adeptly carrying out their responsibilities.

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